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**Decolonising South African museums in a digital age
re-imagining the Iziko Museums' Natal Nguni catalogue and collection**

Gibson, Laura Kate

Awarding institution:
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Decolonising South African Museums
in a Digital Age:
Re-imagining the Iziko Museums'
Natal Nguni Catalogue and Collection

By
Laura Kate Gibson

PhD Thesis
Department of Digital Humanities
King's College London

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[Abstract](#)

This PhD thesis investigates the relationship between decolonisation and digitisation in South African museums. Focusing specifically on the Iziko South African Museum and the material culture collection previously classified as Natal Nguni and Zulu, this thesis interrogates how knowledge about Zulu culture was systematically constructed by the museum through its cataloguing, classifying and collecting practices, and so imbued with colonial and apartheid ideologies. Accepting that decolonisation demands changes at the museum's permanent knowledge-production level, I consider how reconnecting descendent communities with their material culture facilitates alternative, multivocal narratives and whether digital tools can really play a role in this process as a step towards decolonising cultural heritage and ethnographic knowledge.

Through a combination of archival research, interviews with practitioners, and workshops with communities self-identifying as Zulu today, I address the following questions:

1. Did South African museums document ethnographic material culture in a way that constructs a specific narrative about Indigenous cultures? If so, what is this narrative and how is it constructed to the exclusion of others?
2. Is it possible to (re)construct alternative knowledge about Indigenous cultures by differently documenting this material culture? If so, how?

3. How could technology play a meaningful role in this process of decolonising knowledge production in South African museums?

The research findings expose discrepancies that reveal the folly of making digitally available existing museum records that are deeply embedded with unequal, yet normalised, systems; doing so risks uncritically perpetuating and reinforcing them. As well as proposing that serious decolonisation demands more nuanced decisions about the actual material and information that is digitised and made available, this thesis advocates further consideration of the digital landscape in South Africa. Based on fieldwork research, my argument is that digital tools have great potential for making information more easily available and participatory; however, digital divisions persist as a legacy of colonialism and apartheid in South Africa and so potentially disadvantage the same communities. Recognising and addressing this situation is a fundamental second step towards decolonising museum collections whereby descendant communities can access, engage and reconnect with their material culture.

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1. Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1. Background to the Research Problem

In April 2015, following months of protests and demonstrations, the University of Cape Town (UCT) authorised the removal of the controversial statue of Cecil John Rhodes, British Imperialist, mining magnate, and colonial politician, from its privileged position on UCT's upper campus. The fall of Rhodes or, more accurately, the act of tearing him down, was a symbolic victory for anticolonialism. Rather than being an end in itself, however, the removal of the statue provoked many more debates around institutional decolonisation in South Africa, including the #FeesMustFall movement, calls to decolonise university curricula (Mbembé 2016), and, more recently, Wandile Kasibe's (2018) insistence that we must #DecoloniseMuseums in South Africa. This thesis addresses the issue of how we can undertake this decolonisation process at the foundational level where knowledge is produced in and by South African museums.

These calls to decolonise institutions have precedents. On Heritage Day in 1997, three years after the end of apartheid, President Nelson Mandela publicly criticised museums for continuing to perpetuate negative racial stereotypes in their institutions (Witz 2006, Dubin 2006b). At that point, the Bushmen diorama was still on display at the South African Museum (SAM) and Pippa Skotnes' exhibition *Miscast: Negotiating KhoiSan History and Material Culture*, which had been widely criticised for reinforcing precisely those colonial forms of representation it sought to undermine, had just closed at the South African National Gallery (SANG) (Dubin 2009, 2006a).¹ This is not a situation unique to South Africa. Museums and other cultural heritage institutions across Europe, the USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand have likewise been criticised for failing to decolonise the knowledge held

¹ The SAM diorama had, for decades, displayed casts of KhoiSan people holding rudimentary hunting equipment against a painted backdrop of a natural landscape that is otherwise empty of evidence of human dwellings or cultural activity, which emphasised the notion that Indigenous people were not only ahistorical but also outside of culture. The sense that these Bushmen are relics of the past, frozen in time, rather than human beings with a vibrant history, was exacerbated by the display's location alongside other natural history exhibits in the gallery. Attempts were made to reinterpret the diorama by inserting labels into the display, but these appeared little more than token gestures. It was only in April 2001, after the SAM's incorporation into the Iziko Museums network, that the diorama was closed and hidden from public view.

and produced within their institutions (Macdonald 2006b, Boast 2011, Boast, Bravo, and Srinivasan 2007, Christen 2006, Srinivasan et al. 2009, Boast and Enote 2013, Peers and Brown 2003). South African museum practices have received some attention in this respect (Davison 1990, Coombes 1994) but less so since independence in 1994 and rarely to the same degree as those in other settler societies, particularly in terms of information held within the catalogues and collections.² It is here that my research makes an original contribution.

Since Mandela's pronouncement in 1997, the South African museum sector has made significant moves towards transformation, not least by adopting affirmative action hiring practices at all levels, by supporting community-based museums such as the District Six Museum and the Lwandle Migrant Labour Museum, and by making a commitment to exhibitions such as *The Neglected Tradition: Towards a New History of South African Art (1930–1988)* (Johannesburg Art Gallery, 2003) that displayed works by 100 mainly black artists who hadn't exhibited previously, and *TRANCEnding Time and Space: Sacred Symbols of the San* (SANG, 2000), which acted as a correction to *Miscast*. More recently, museums in South Africa, as elsewhere, have attempted to harness digital technologies as a route to transformation (Iziko Museums of South Africa 2014b).

Yet, as Wayne Modest (2018) points out, these kinds of projects can be very frustrating for anyone interested in fundamentally decolonising museums because they are tangential; they don't disrupt the museum's core knowledge production processes. What, then, do we mean by institutional decolonisation, specifically within museums? How do South African museums avoid the situation that Grant McNulty (2011) has identified as problematic attempts to rectify past inequalities by "tacking on of non-white history to existing collections and no significant engagement with the categories, classifications and Eurocentric nature of collections," whether through more established museum technologies or newer, digital ones?

I accept South African historian Mbongeseni Buthelezi's contention that decolonisation requires slower, more painstaking work than, for example, mounting

² For the purposes of my thesis and in line with current conversations about decolonisation in South Africa, I am accepting Dr Lwazi Siyabonga Lushaba's (2017) more radical contention that South Africa only truly achieved independence in 1994 after the country's first democratic elections.

interesting, attention-grabbing exhibitions or tearing down statues of colonial icons (McKaiser, Wright, and Buthelezi 2017). It means looking in detail at the past and engaging with the very categories and classifications we use to talk about it, but without simply replacing them with counterversions (Buthelezi 2016) so that we can break out of Mahmood Mamdani's (1996, 3) "paralysis of perspective." Sociologists Martha Lampland and Susan Leigh Star (2009b) acknowledge that these more profound changes often necessitate more boring work. Indigenous and feminist scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999), as well as Valentine Mudimbe (1988) and Dipesh Chakrabarty (2008), drawing on Michel Foucault's work, insist that decolonising knowledge means first probing and revealing the rules of practice for constructing knowledge. As they and Geoffrey Bowker and Star (2000) point out, these rules of practice are often so normalised that they are very difficult to see or describe. But revealing them makes it obvious just how much work went into stabilising them in the first place so that they appear normal and natural (Lampland and Star 2009a, Stoler 2016). My thesis contends that this kind of interrogation has been neglected in South African museums and, by focussing specifically on the core knowledge production processes of cataloguing and classifying, I aim to address this gap through my research as part of work on the broader decolonisation question.

This need for further interrogation is true for both analogue and digital knowledge production. Champions of museum digitisation projects laud their ability to make accessible the many items hidden away from the public in museum storerooms and to allow visitors opportunities to interact in intimate ways with digital surrogates, activities that Howard Besser believes will have "a significant democratizing effect" (Jones-Garmil 1997, 118). The issue I take with this very positive view is that the documentation and items museums decide to digitise and make available do not represent a complete or neutral narrative of our past; they embody all the idiosyncrasies and inequalities of the systems within which they were collected. Modest (2018) is similarly dismissive of attempts to conflate digitisation with access and decolonisation.

While we may like to imagine, as postcolonial theorist Edward Said ([1978] 2003) posits, that "in a general way...learning and scholarship move forward; they get better...as time passes and as more information is accumulated, methods are refined, and later generations of scholars improve upon earlier ones," (202) we cannot

divorce ourselves entirely from our predecessors and the circumstances that provoked their ideas. Decisions we make today are unavoidably influenced by those made in the past; if we simply digitise and make available information gathered in a colonial framework, we risk reinforcing this framework beneath a dangerous veneer of impartiality. More than that, the digital technologies that we rely on are deeply implicated in and influenced by the same colonial practices and legacies we hope to overcome. Too often, the catalogue is perceived as a source of objective metadata rather than as a complex knowledge production system in itself. As South African archivist Michele Pickover (2014) makes clear, digitisation is never a neutral activity. Like Haidy Geismar (2018), I too am reluctant to view digital technologies as a new, utopian break with more established museum practices of cataloguing and classifying.

The objects that are and are not available in collections and what we know and do not know about them through information recorded in museum catalogues—digital or analogue—are not mere matters of curiosity. The wider, longstanding epistemological question within which I locate my research has real-world implications and consequences for people, making it, as Said ([1993] 1994, 238) suggests, a matter of “urgent political moment.” Indeed, as communities once marginalised by law become progressively politicised, heritage items assume greater significance in clarifying and consolidating struggles for self-determination and rectifying inequalities in access to land, resources, education, or healthcare (Sleeper-Smith 2009, Herle 2003, Buthelezi 2016, Harris, Nakata, and Carlson 2013). Given South Africa’s current debates about land expropriation, this investigation has immediate relevance (Madia 2018).

1.2. Research Questions

Working, then, from a postcolonial and feminist standpoint underscoring that all knowledge is constructed and situated and that museums produce, rather than simply reflect, specific knowledges, my interest is in challenging and changing the historically colonial narrative perpetuated by museums in South Africa. My work takes as its point of departure the belief that cataloguing, classifying, and collecting processes are the foundational level at which museums produce knowledge; hence I narrowed my research to focus on museum documentation systems, both analogue and digital, in South Africa. I draw on Said, Foucault, Tuhiwai Smith, Chakrabarty,

Mudimbe, Buthelezi, Hannah Turner, Bowker, Star, and Lampland in particular and maintain that before developing alternative knowledge systems, we must first understand how they were constructed to produce a very particular way of knowing. Having gained a deeper understanding of these mechanisms and accepted that all knowledge is constructed, I researched the possibility of challenging the prevailing narrative by constructing alternative cataloguing and classifying systems that address many of the silences and exclusions I anticipated uncovering in the colonial documentation. Cognisant of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's and others' work on subaltern histories, I remained very aware that this task would demand quite different approaches to cataloguing and classifying, not least in terms of who is involved in the processes. Given the broadening interest in digital technologies in South Africa, like elsewhere, I wanted to investigate whether these tools might facilitate such alternative approaches. I dismissed notions of a digital utopia or claims that the digital age marks any clean break with contentious analogue technologies and consequently understood that digital museum practices demand similar interrogations to those I conducted on analogue museum practices of cataloguing and classifying.

In seeking to answer this broader question of decolonising South African museum documentation systems in the digital age, I subsequently pose three research questions:

1. Did South African museums document ethnographic material culture in a way that constructs a specific narrative about Indigenous cultures? If so, what is this narrative and how is it constructed to the exclusion of others?
2. Is it possible to (re)construct alternative knowledge about Indigenous cultures by differently documenting this material culture? If so, how?
3. How could technology play a meaningful role in this process of decolonising knowledge production in South African museums?

1.3. The South African Museum and Natal Nguni Collection

To answer these questions within the constraints of a PhD, I adopt a case study approach and investigate museum documentation systems at a single South African museum with the intention that my findings will have wider relevance. My thesis thus focuses specifically on how the South African Museum (SAM), the oldest and

largest museum in southern Africa and now part of the Iziko Museums of South Africa conglomerate, constructed Indigenous African cultures, particularly Zulu, as “Other.”³

The SAM’s lengthy history and commitment to documentation practices, as well as its renewed interest in digitisation, evidenced by the recently formed Collections and Digitisation Department in 2017, made it an ideal case study for answering my research questions. As I discuss in my Methodology chapter, I narrowed my research further to focus on the former Natal Nguni collection, which includes items ranging from baskets to pots to herbs and beaded headdresses that had entered the museum in various ways and forms since the mid-nineteenth century. Once part of the SAM’s anthropology and ethnography collection, Iziko now categorises them as Social History items, a classification that has accorded them a right to space and storage within the refurbished National Mutual Building in the heart of Cape Town’s City Bowl.

I spent several months researching the Iziko archive during 2016 and 2017. Working with the former SAM’s annual reports, accession registers, catalogue cards, and correspondence, I charted the changing cataloguing and classifying practices, which shift alongside the collections. This revealed significant gaps in the archive’s narrative while exposing the highly constructed character of the knowledge it produced within a colonial epistemology. The many conscious decisions made by the SAM about what information to include on the catalogue cards, such as the donor’s name and object’s “tribe,” and what to exclude, the maker’s name, for example, is illustrative of this. Most significant is Miss Shaw’s A–K code for authenticating information recorded on the catalogue cards, a system that implicitly disregards descendent communities as reliable knowledge bearers.⁴ This research

³ I acknowledge that the notion of indigeneity is highly problematic in South Africa and incorporating Zulu people under this umbrella term is somewhat controversial. I have made the decision to do so in conscious defiance of colonial and apartheid era categories and narratives that denied “Bantu” people citizenship in their own country, forcing them instead into overcrowded, under-resourced Bantustans, another instance of the real-world consequences of classification to which Bowker and Star (2000) refer. I use “Indigenous” in recognition of this very citizenship right for historically marginalised communities. My intention is not, however, to undermine or distract from the struggles of Khoi or San (also referred to as “Bushmen”) communities, those recognised as hunting and gathering groups by the Indigenous Peoples of Africa Co-ordinating Committee (IPACC), for their equal rights, representation, and respect in South Africa.

⁴ Miss Shaw was the SAM’s professional ethnologist, 1933–1981.

illustrates how problematic it is to replicate the seemingly innocuous catalogue cards in digital form.

As Nessa Leibhammer (2016) notes and Paul Tichmann (pers. comm., April 18, 2018) Iziko's director of collections and digitisation, concurs, these ethnographic collections have, for various reasons discussed later in this thesis, received little curatorial interest since Independence. Indeed, despite their physical move and broad reclassification as social history collections earlier this century, the Natal Nguni collection and documentation remains almost intact from the colonial period. Source, or descendent, communities have rarely been partners in producing new knowledge systems in the postapartheid period, which means the knowledge held by this collection still embodies one, normalising narrative rather than being something multivocal with the possibility of being postcolonial.

The next part of my research addressed this very absence of descendent communities as knowledge producers in the documentation. I made several trips to KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) during this period, where I conducted workshops and interviews with communities I identified as descendants of those producing the Natal Nguni collection. By working with these groups, what my research attempts is to uncover the possibility of producing more multivocal narratives about this former Natal Nguni collection in ways that challenge the very epistemological basis on which knowledge is constructed. My data further exposes the many silences in the collection's current documentation. At the same time, it suggests that adopting respectful ways of working with descendent communities can elicit new ideas about cataloguing and classifying items that prioritise different aspects of the items' materiality, biography, agency, and relationship with other items. These undermine any notion of a homogenous Zulu people or culture, as conceived by the colonial and apartheid regimes, and similarly challenge the idea of a "primitive, timeless and unchanging" Indigenous society (Hamilton and Leibhammer 2016a, 14).

While my fieldwork does suggest that, if conceived in partnership with descendent communities, digital technologies might offer opportunities to produce alternative catalogues that simultaneously expose the constructed nature of all knowledge while accommodating multiple narratives, my results also conclude that technology alone cannot engineer a solution to South Africa's colonial legacy. By interrogating the

digital landscape of these specific descendent communities in KZN, I reveal why place and context mean we must remain sceptical that digital technologies are any more universal or normal than other museum technologies of cataloguing or classifying. Mobile phones may seem ubiquitous in South Africa, but high data costs, poor Internet infrastructure outside the urban centres, and limited English language and literacy skills in more rural areas are very real practical barriers to access for these communities that exacerbate more conceptual concerns around the country's digital divide. Other findings, however, such as a genuine interest in this type of work amongst the communities and their willingness to engage with certain digital platforms, do offer avenues for museums using technology more on the communities' terms. Such practices might go some way towards decolonising knowledge at the documentation level.

1.4. Outline of the Argument

The following chapter of this thesis provides the theoretical framework for my inquiry. Beginning with an exploration of how certain knowledge systems come to be accepted as "truths" in certain times and places, the first chapter considers how imperial narratives assumed insidious power over and through museums so that they became *the* way of understanding and ordering the world. As both John Ransom (1997) and Susanne Schech (2002, 21) declare, "if power and knowledge are intertwined, it follows that one way to understand power—potentially to destabilise it or change its form—is to take a firm hold of the knowledge that is right there at the center [*sic*] of its operations." Apprehending how museums marginalised other narratives through normalising practices, practices of cataloguing and classifying artefacts that persist today but are rarely problematised, does indeed disclose possibilities for considering other ways of knowing. More than this, this process hints at how we can give space to alternative voices by understanding the limitations of our own frameworks. At the same time, a comprehensive review of the literature highlights how very challenging it is to dismantle colonial structures, even if the best intentions are there. Essentialism, tokenism, and homogenisation are among the criticisms justly levelled at museums working with source communities today.

One insight that is significant for my research is that these problems do not disappear in the digital world. Despite optimistic ideas about the neutrality of the Internet and its potential to democratise knowledge, I demonstrate that power imbalances,

particularly in museums, are frequently exacerbated by digital technologies and digitisation projects, especially in the Global South. In fact, the digital sphere presents cultural heritage institutions with another set of challenges even as it opens possibilities for overcoming others. Yet, as Marianne Winther Jørgensen (2010) shrewdly observes, identifying the problem of marginalisation and exclusion is not synonymous with finding a solution to it.

With this in mind, in my third chapter I appraise those museum digitisation projects that have seemingly proved more successful at working with source communities in ways that decolonise their core knowledge producing activities, even if this means relinquishing much of their authority. The museums that captured my attention are all located in countries that, like South Africa, have been colonised and settled by Europeans, where museums are not separated from their source communities by crude national boundaries, oceans, or continents. While I do not propose that a solution developed in a museum in Canada, the USA, Australia, or New Zealand might be transplanted wholesale to South Africa, their knowledge of working with marginalised communities in their countries has offered a starting point for thinking about possible approaches towards digitisation projects that better decolonise museums in South Africa.

My fourth chapter explains my choice of reflexive methodology and the specific methods I employed to answer my three research questions, informed by my previous Literature Review. I give detailed accounts of my two-phased research approach that included both historical archival research at the Iziko Museums and participant observation, semi-structured interviews and workshops with descendent communities in KZN. I also explain the ethical considerations that shaped my approach.

The following three chapters provide my research results. Structured around my research questions, Chapter 5 draws primarily on my archival research at Iziko, while Chapters 6 and 7 analyse the results of my fieldwork activities in KZN. Chapter 5 charts the SAM's development as a colonial institution and how the museum assembled the ethnographic collection between the 1930s and 1980s. I look at the changing modes of collecting and cataloguing over this period and, specifically, at how Miss Shaw developed and implemented her classification and

cataloguing system, which persists today. The final part of this chapter focuses on early computerisation at the SAM and the fate of the ethnographic collections since Independence in 1994.

My sixth chapter moves out of the archive and into present day KZN. I first provide explanations for the alternative categories and classifications these descendent communities seemingly prioritise about their material culture, based on results from my first four workshops. I then propose developing new relationships between items, based on an analysis of these findings. I consider how we deal with items that have been either misclassified or misidentified, according to descendent communities, and draw on my research as a predoctoral research fellow at the Smithsonian Institution to explore this question further. Finally, I consider how this work might historicise the collection and what options there are for fruitfully expanding ethnographic collections in future.

Chapter 7 locates my work more specifically in the digital context. Offering a critical overview of previous digitisation projects in South Africa, as well as of the present day Five Hundred Year Archive (FHYA) project, I analyse the particular digital landscapes in which my interlocutors operate with the intention of understanding how these will affect any attempts to use digital technologies to decolonise South African museums in future. I consider these communities' possible barriers to access, which range from poor Internet infrastructure and high data costs to basic literacy issues and differing digital values. I also highlight the extensive influence and use of Facebook before considering the often-unintended benefits and threats these communities might experience when engaging with digital versions of their material culture. I conclude with a discussion about digital repatriation and return as it relates to these interlocutors.

My penultimate Conclusions chapter draws together my previous analyses as well as exploring the limitations of my research before offering recommendations for future research in the final chapter. What each chapter attempts to do is consider the often slow and painstaking work involved in decolonising South African museums in the digital age so that we might re-imagine many more catalogues than the Iziko Museums' Natal Nguni collection in the postcolonial period.

2. Chapter 2 – Ways of Knowing, Analogue and Digital

2.1. Introduction

As Said ([1993] 1994, 341) asserts, “imperialism did not end, did not suddenly become ‘past,’ once decolonization had set in motion the dismantling of the classical empires.” At the turn of this century, Achille Mbembé (2001, 237) still found it necessary to ask, “have we really entered another [postcolonial] period?” Writing more than half a century after the dismantling process began, Ann Laura Stoler (2016) argued that the aetiologies of the world’s most pressing problems are still intimately connected with these enduring, durable colonial histories and imperial formations. Their physical manifestations also linger so that, as Richard Drayton (2018) has cogently argued, we live and move through a symbolic landscape of Empire, one littered with statues of Cecil Rhodes, Louis Botha, and Queen Victoria in Cape Town, South Africa. While tearing these monuments down is an important statement of anticolonialism, these scholars demand that we consider how else—and where else—we can interrogate this permeating imperialism in (post)colonial times.⁵ This is not a purely intellectual exercise, as Stoler’s grim expositions of the dumping of toxic waste in Africa, the Palestine/Israeli situation, and the French radical right reveal, since these effects of colonialism are both lived and real in terrible ways.

As one of the earliest scholars to articulate how fundamentally destructive certain kinds of knowledge can be to those marginalised or ignored by it, Said ([1993] 1994, 238) similarly insists that these are “matters not simply of academic speculation, but of urgent political moment” with real world consequences. In South Africa, Buthelezi (2016) contends that deeply embedded colonial ideas frame how we address such exigent issues as redressing land claims, whereby it is impossible to properly rectify this without first probing the terms and categories we use to describe people and societies implicated in and by the debate.

I draw heavily on postcolonial theory of the kind Said, Mbembe, Stoler, Drayton, and Buthelezi develop as a way of theorising my own investigations into how colonial histories shape our presents, often in insidious ways. The associated works that I review in the first part of this chapter offer tools for understanding more

⁵ Stoler’s use of (post)colonial in parenthesis emphasises the presence of colonialism and her scepticism that we have moved past colonialism. I share her scepticism but, for ease of reading, revert to using “postcolonialism” hereafter.

broadly how imperial narratives came to dominate museum practices and still shape them today, even in post-independence South Africa. While I also draw on Frantz Fanon's ([1967] 2017) decolonisation work to theorise my own, I dispute his (and Karl Marx's) contention that our priority should be to change the world rather than to analyse it (Gilroy 2017), and instead align myself with other writers that I subsequently review, including Tuhiwai Smith (1999), postcolonial theorist and subaltern studies historian Chakrabarty (2008), and Congolese philosopher and historian Mudimbe (1988, 1994), who strive for an unmasking of the repressive strategies and rules of practice that construct the colonised "other" in the first place.

Drawing, then, on wider investigations into the process of knowledge production, particularly those of social theorists Michel Foucault and Bruno Latour, whose influences are keenly felt in museology, I also locate my work on the SAM's Natal Nguni collection within wider ontological and epistemological debates around knowledge and context. These ideas frame my thinking about the museum's core knowledge production activities of cataloguing and classifying, which Ramesh Srinivasan, Jim Enoté, Katherine M. Becvar, and Robin Boast (2009) consider the permanent work of museums, since they endure beyond exhibition cycles and seasonal education programmes. It is at this level that we can begin the slow work that Buthelezi (2016) regards as necessary for decolonisation: refiguring the categories and language we use when grappling with the past. What these museum and infrastructure studies texts dealing with difference and othering offer is a standpoint for interrogating the SAM's knowledge production activities, for understanding not only the types of narratives that *are* told by the museum's collections and documentation, but also why and how others are (still) excluded. Moreover, this broader body of work demands that we consider the huge amount of work that goes into stabilising knowledge in the first place (Stoler 2016, Lampland and Star 2009b).

Reviewing this literature prompted my first research question, "Did South African museums document ethnographic material culture in a way that constructs a specific narrative about Indigenous cultures? If so, what is this narrative and how is it constructed to the exclusion of others?" Answering this meant pursuing a similar process of revealing knowledge-producing practices based on the assumption that knowledge is always situated, contextual, and hence constructed.

Revealing these practices and exclusions does not, however, immediately give rise to a strategy to rectify them, as the second part of this chapter shows. So instinctive are our ways of producing, framing and categorising knowledge that it becomes extremely difficult to develop alternative paradigms that move beyond simple counter-narratives, a situation Mamdani (1996, 3) skilfully articulates as a “paralysis of perspective.” As the works reviewed in the next section show, there are many potential pitfalls in working with marginalised knowledge systems and subaltern stories. If we are not fully cognisant of these, we risk replicating the same colonial structures we seek to undermine. Having emphasised how important it is that we constantly question, critique, and discuss the legitimacy of *all* knowledge produced so that we take seriously other ontological and epistemological viewpoints, I focus on works that deal more specifically with such debates in terms of how we think about objects, or “belongings,” as Kate Hennessy and Turner (2018) more appropriately term them, particularly when working with different cultures and source communities.

These ideas carry great weight for my research since I interacted with, and relied upon, museum objects in my fieldwork. This body of work, which focuses on alternative—as opposed to counter—narratives, epistemologies, and ontologies framed my second research question, “Is it possible to (re)construct alternative knowledge about Indigenous cultures by differently documenting this material culture? If so, how?”

Drawing these ideas into the specific context of the digital world, I dispute the notion that items or museums can be divided into analogue and digital in any simple way. As Geismar (2018) makes clear, while digital objects and museums are used in many different and new ways, presenting them as utopian alternatives imbues them with the same “moralising” tendencies evident in Victorian-era ethnographic displays. Both digital and analogue objects are “beset with cultural assumptions” (9). Our challenge is to avoid the universalising narrative of digital and instead consider how it varies according to place and context, and then pay more attention to these specific contexts. Anthropologists Heather Horst and Daniel Miller (2012)—who display a commitment to holism and a Hegelian acceptance that, in the case of the digital, the simultaneous growth of the universal and of the particular are dependent upon one

another—also insist on exploring specific cultural contexts in their prospectus for digital anthropology. Likewise, anthropologists Joshua A. Bell and Joel Kuipers (2018) demonstrate how significant cultural context is for understanding how digital cell phone technologies operate in different parts of the world.

Geismar (2018) suggests that we employ the same kinds of methods used to reveal the “authoritative epistemologies” (20) preserved in museum collecting and documenting practices—as reviewed earlier in this chapter—to unpack and expose how these are similarly enshrined in digital platforms. Knowledge in museums, as she points out, is produced by numerous technologies and all of these are culturally constituted; digital technologies are merely the latest of these. Within this framework, and by exploring debates around both the challenges and opportunities digital tools offer to museums working with marginalised communities, as well as by considering the ways these are further affected by economic, social, and cultural situations, I develop a theoretical justification for examining the specifically South African digital context as part of any knowledge decolonisation project.

2.2. Constructing and Documenting Knowledge: Cataloguing “Otherness” in a Colonial Context

In his preface to *The Order of Things*, Foucault treats his readers to an amusing passage from Borges that quotes a “certain Chinese encyclopaedia” where animals are divided into:

“(a) belonging to the Emperor, (b) embalmed, (c) tame, (d) sucking pigs, (e) sirens, (f) fabulous, (g) stray dogs, (h) included in the present classification, (i) frenzied, (j) innumerable, (k) drawn with a very fine camelhair brush, (l) et cetera, (m) having just broken the water pitcher, (n) that from a long way off look like flies.” (Foucault [1966] 2002, xvi)

His intention is not to provoke laughter, but to succinctly introduce his core argument that ways of ordering and knowing our world are neither fixed nor inevitable: they are mutable and historical. As he explains, this wondrous taxonomy succeeds in persuasively demonstrating the “limitation of our own” (xvi) ways of ordering the world. What Borges’ passage does is raise the possibility that there is another, other culture that similarly orders space and the world, but without using any of the categories or classifications with which we are familiar, those that allow us to “name, speak, and think” (xix).

Having advanced this proposition, Foucault is then able to proceed more easily towards showing that likewise in the Western world, where there is a sense “that order exists” (xxi) and is simply waiting to be discovered, this too is folly. Indeed, the order on which we base our thinking today is not the same as that of previous ages and, subsequently, is unlikely to be the same in future ages. As he demonstrates, we no longer construct knowledge around “resemblance” (19) as we did in the sixteenth century, nor do we accept close observation of surface markings as the method for ordering and knowing, as was the case in the seventeenth century. By the eighteenth century, this way of knowing was also overshadowed by interest in what lies beneath, in “hidden structures... [and] so many invisible functions” (290); hence, there was a reinvigorated interest in anatomy during this period. Sharon MacDonald (2006a, 84) applies this idea more specifically to museums, arguing that relationships between items that were immediately obvious to sixteenth century audiences have changed so significantly that we can no longer recognise “resemblances” between objects in the same way today.

More significantly, as both Foucault and Tuhiwai Smith (1999) suggest, those working within the dominant system of thinking at any particular time cannot necessarily describe their rules of practice. So taken for granted is this system that, by comparing, differentiating, hierarchizing, homogenising, and excluding, it “in short...normalizes” (Foucault 1991a). Bowker and Star (2000, 192), whose work on classification is certainly influenced by Foucault, likewise recognise that there are many different ways of ordering and understanding the world: “there is not just one kind of classification in the world” and “classification work is always multiple.” They similarly reiterate that our ignorance of the practices and categories that play such a significant role in our lives is astonishing, yet it is this very obliviousness that makes these invisible entities so potent. Indeed, as Lampland (2009a) and Stoler (2016) explain, it is through the “enormous amount of work needed to stabilize knowledge” that classifications and standards appear “fixed and neutral” and so able to obscure all the work that went into their creation in the first place (Lampland and Star 2009a, 14). This is the very paradox at the heart of Latour’s (1999) concept of blackboxing: the more science and technology succeed, the more opaque and obscure they become.

Yet, as Bowker and Star's (2000) work on the World Health Organisation's International Classification of Diseases (ICD), as well as their work on both Nursing Work Interventions and Racial Classifications in apartheid South Africa, illustrates, while classifications are unnatural, constructed, and obscure, they still have real world consequences that make them worthy of far greater attention than they have often received. This is a point to which Foucault ([1969] 2002, 28) returns in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* when he urges us to disturb the "tranquillity" of those syntheses and groupings we normally accept as inherently valid. For Tuhiwai Smith (1999), blind acceptance of such norms is a major obstacle when working with Indigenous archives of knowledge, since serious decolonisation first requires that these rules of practice be revealed.

Neither Foucault nor I have an interest in determining whether one historical way of ordering the world is better or worse than another, whether one is "closest to a primary, or ultimate, destination" (Foucault [1969] 2002, 142); rather, Foucault is interested in exploring how one way of knowing came to be accepted as *the* way of knowing and out of these "techniques," a particular discourse "came to be seen as true" (Foucault and Rabinow 1991, 7). His suspicion of universal truths leads Paul Rabinow (1991, 4) to declare that for Foucault "there is no external position of certainty, no universal understanding that is beyond history and society." Likewise, in *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, Chakrabarty's (2008, xiii - xiv) intention is precisely to reveal the "universal" as "a highly unstable figure...always and already modified by particular histories." While Foucault (and Chakrabarty) are not without their critics—Noam Chomsky (1996), for example, counters that language is evidence of truths both real and independent of worldly structures—Foucault's work has had a profound influence on both postcolonial thinkers and museologists, not least because he opens up the possibility of exploring alternative knowledge systems that challenge imperial "truths." Moreover, he offers a method, "genealogy," for uncovering how these "truths" were accepted as such, and how these truths are still effective despite being produced within discourses that are also neither true nor false (Foucault 1991b).⁶ It is this

⁶ Foucault (1991b, 59) explains genealogy as "a form of history which can account for the constitution of knowledges, discourses, domains of objects, etc., without having to make reference to a subject which is either transcendental in relation to the field of events or runs in its empty sameness throughout the course of history."

genealogy method that I apply in my fifth chapter to investigate the SAM's own knowledge production processes.

Latour (1999, 2008) offers other methods for understanding the process of knowledge production that can be helpfully applied to museum work. His work, like Foucault's, rejects a modernist realist position, where facts are "out there" waiting to be discovered, while also dismissing a post-modernist relativist stance that understands facts as being merely social constructs. Latour (1999, 109) instead seeks an alternative explanation—"realistic realism"—which repudiates the very "gap between words and the world" or between subject and object on which both realism and relativism rest. Closing this "yawning gap" (109), he argues, depends on invigorating the mediations between the two rather than on interrogating them as distant extremes, which artificially creates a "problem" of reference.

Through his close analysis of the activities undertaken by scientists in the Boa Vista Brazilian rainforest, Latour demonstrates in *Pandora's Hope* that, far from there being a huge gap between the world of the rainforest and their final research paper, there are numerous small, intermediate steps of translation in which plant and scientist are both transformed: the botanist "learns new things" while the plants are "detached, separated, preserved, classified, and tagged" before being "reassembled, reunited, redistributed" (1999, 39). Knowledge, argues Latour, is derived from these "movements" rather than "simple contemplation of the forest" (39). The pedocomparator—"a series of empty little cardboard cubes aligned to form a square" that carries clods of earth specimens extracted by scientists—an item that belongs to both the world of things and signs—permits and illustrates these abstractions and transformations, whereby references can travel vast distances between the rainforest and research paper (47). What is significant is that during each transformation there is both discontinuity and continuity—something is both lost and gained—and these transformations take place over much smaller distances. Through this chain of transformations, "truth value circulates" (69). If we fail to consider this chain, which mediates matter to form, we create a void, a position Latour likens to cutting the wire between lamp and switch and wondering how one could correspond to the other. Indeed, it is this chain of strung-together translations that comprises Latour's "circulating reference."

Tony Bennett (2009) applies Latour's circulation of reference between world and word to explain more specifically the flows between museum, field, and colony associated with colonial forms of governmentality. He argues that the "movements of texts, objects, and personnel from colonial sites of collection to metropolitan centres of calculation, and back again" fundamentally shaped colonial governmentalities (100). Specimens taken from the field to the laboratory or museum during colonial expeditions could now be viewed as contemporaries of one another under a single unifying gaze, and their mobility meant they could be interchanged and substituted for one another. The task of the museum is now to analyse the "passage of 'other cultures'" along this chain of transformations and the forms in which "other cultures" were collected (film recordings, photographs, field notes etc) (105). In turn, we can consider how these "constructed worlds" are mobilised through such assemblages for action back on the colonial social (105).

What these structural theories offer is a way of understanding knowledge as both situated and contextual. Within the framework of new museology—an approach Peter Vergo understands as more "about the purposes of museums"—MacDonald (2006c, 2) likewise argues that museologists now accept object meanings as similarly "situated and contextual rather than inherent." Unsurprisingly, at the heart of new museology is a sense that the "pursuit, realization, and deployment" of knowledge is deeply political. Deconstructing cultural products, such as exhibitions and texts, to "probe" the contexts in which particular knowledges "reigned," while others were "marginalized or ignored," is important in new museology because it reveals how inequalities are produced and reproduced through exclusions from "the canon," "the norm," "the objective," and "the notable" (3).

Like Stoler, Said and Buthelezi, Macdonald (2006c, 3) argues that these representations of difference and otherness feed back into the world outside the museum and academy, where they support particular regimes of power, "most usually the status quo." Richard Sandell (2007, 3) similarly credits museums with the "power to privilege particular forms of knowledge and to naturalise highly particularised sets of values," even while arguing that they should not be attempting social change. This is exactly the argument John Wright and Aron Mazel (1991) and Mazel and Gaby Ritchie (1994) make about how museums functioned in South Africa during the apartheid years. As Macdonald (2006b, 15) succinctly summarises,

museums “inform not just how we see what is in them, but also how we see what is outside, and how we see ourselves.” Bennett (2006, 278) likewise argues that museums have always been places “for making differences – whether natural, social, or cultural – visible,” yet this difference has been framed around “restricted understandings of citizenship” that have been limited to white, male, middle class viewpoints at various points, particularly so in South Africa, where the consequences have been devastating.

2.2.1. Destructive Knowledge

Knowledge, albeit constructed and situated, does indeed have real consequences because of the powerful representations it permits. For those marginalised and ignored by certain kinds of knowledge, these effects are destructive and devastating precisely because, as MacDonald (2006b) states, it shapes how people are perceived and subsequently treated. This is exactly the point Said makes about knowledge and imperialism. Initially taking the constructed, binary relationship between the “West” and “Orient,” a relationship “of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony” (Said [1978] 2003, 5) as his site of inquiry, Said ([1993] 1994) later expanded his research to consider the West and all its overseas territories, including Africa. The inherently racist and imperialistic worldview on which these relationships were constructed by the West find expression in culture and literature so that, Said argues, culture and literature did not merely act as a “rationalization” of colonialism but as a “cause” of colonial rule since the “truths” they expounded “justified” colonialism before “rather than after the fact” (Said [1978] 2003, 39).

Indeed, Said ([1978] 2003, 27, emphasis in original) cautions that “the *strength* of Western cultural discourse, [is] a strength too often mistaken as merely decorative or ‘superstructural;’” culture can never be understood as “politically, even historically innocent.” Drawing on this analysis, it becomes easier to argue for the notion that museums have a significant impact on society as contributors to and perpetrators of cultural discourse, as agents of a “form of cultural leadership...Gramsci has identified as hegemony,” where “certain cultural forms predominate over others, just as certain ideas are more influential than others” (Said [1978] 2003, 7). It is hegemony that normalises an understanding of the world whereby differences are made but the “Westerner” never loses the “relative upper hand” “in a whole series of relationships with the Orient” (7).

Like Said, Mudimbe has been described as a “whistle-blower against ideologies of *Otherness*,” something which Mudimbe sometimes refers to as alterity (Mazrui 2005, 69). In *The Invention of Africa*, his interest is, as Said’s was in *Orientalism*, in “dealing with” and “interrogating” “discourses on African societies, cultures, and peoples” to understand the type of knowledge they propose about Africa (Mudimbe 1988, ix). Rather than considering whether the knowledge is accurate or not, he looks “upstream of the results” (x) in a Foucauldian fashion to see what made those results possible in the first place. Drawing again on Foucault, Mudimbe seems to suggest that a mistake often made when producing knowledge on or about Africa is forgetting that our “reflexive categories, principles of classification, normative rules, institutionalized types” are “not intrinsic, autochthonous, and universally recognizable characteristics” (Foucault [1969] 2002, 25). Mbembé (2001) similarly criticises the way Western theory “privileges” certain kinds of “universal” (10) categories and classifications without ever challenging their universal application.

Mudimbe and Mbembé’s ultimate conclusion is that knowledge produced on Africa is limited by the fact that both Western interpreters and African analysts use “categories and conceptual systems which depend on a Western epistemological order” in a way that is testament to colonialism’s efficacy (Mudimbe 1988, x). Most significant to Mudimbe (1988) is the way a dichotomous structure—imposed in the name of “sameness”—reduces difference, or “otherness” “to the already known,” which allows the West to “escape” the demand of “making sense of other worlds” (72); what is different is merely seen as lacking that with which it is being compared, thus it is simply the negative. It is precisely this “negative interpretation” of Africa, which propped up the West’s sense of self, that preoccupied Mbembé (2001, 1) some years later in his own work on the postcolony.

2.2.2. Normalising Frameworks

Oyeronke Oyewumi’s (2006) dispute with Western feminism’s supposedly universal understanding of gender and “woman” as a social category is a perfect example of Mudimbe and Mbembé’s argument that Western conceptual systems are too often taken for granted. Oyewumi demonstrates how a European, or English, penchant for binaries means the Nigerian Yoruba words “oko” and “iyawo” (317) are often mistakenly translated in the West as husband and wife. In fact, “oko” encompasses both male and female. “Iyawo” correctly refers to in-married brides, is female, and

is inferior to “oko”; however, “oko” can also be female and superior to the “iyawo.” These identities shift over time within the family structure and so are more fluid than a Western notion of gender. Similarly, in Shona culture, women can assume patriarchal authority and be freed from “women’s work” (319), which reinforces Oyewumi’s argument that in Africa, one’s status is not always inherent in the male or female body. Her argument that “analysis and interpretations of Africa must start with Africa” again highlights the many ways in which Eurocentric categories and the analyses they facilitate may overlook such understandings, because interpretations are made based on a set of assumptions viewed as normal rather than constructed (320). Before developing sophisticated interpretations, we must first understand what these assumptions are and how they might distort our analysis.

Spivak (1988) similarly considers the ways narratives are historically silenced because normalising frameworks mean we lack the tools necessary to hear them in the first place. In “Can the Subaltern Speak?,” she achieves this by exploring the ways Bhuvaneswari Bhaduri’s suicide in North Calcutta in 1926 was variously documented. In some accounts her suicide was recorded as prompted by a sense of shame after failing to undertake a political assassination in the armed struggle for Indian independence, and in others by a “melancholia” resulting from her brother-in-law’s “taunts” that she was too old to be a wife, as well as an illicit love affair, despite the fact that Bhuvaneswari was menstruating at the time of her suicide and so certainly not “illegitimately” pregnant (Spivak 1988, 103-104). Spivak uses Bhuvaneswari’s suicide as an example of a subaltern woman attempting “to speak,” trying “to represent herself” using her body, but failing to be heard because her methods fall outside of those recognised by “official institutional structures of representation” (Spivak, Landry, and MacLean 1996a, 306).⁷ Consequently, she argues against Foucault’s suggestion that the oppressed can represent themselves and that intellectuals hence have no business representing them. While Foucault (2002a, 134) states that his task is “not to give voice to the silence,” this is precisely Spivak’s, and, in some ways, my, preoccupation. Spivak speaks of historians, such as the Subaltern Studies Group, as “attending to the subaltern past” using “texts from

⁷ Spivak is quite clear that “speak” does not literally mean “to talk”. Rather, that even if one did utter, or talk, “it would have to be interpreted in the way in which we historically interpret anything” and so, unless it is recognised within this framework, the subaltern cannot be heard and so, effectively, did not speak. (Spivak, Landry, and MacLean 1996a, 291)

the other side,” which she recognises as important because, despite the inherent difficulties, not attending to this means doing nothing at all (Spivak, Landry, and MacLean 1996a, 307). Furthermore, Carine Zaayman (2014) meets this challenge by working with these unbounded absences in South African archives through her notion of the *anarchive*, which aims specifically to bring them back into focus. What this process of deconstruction does not mean, as Spivak is at pains to point out, is that “there is no subject, there is no truth, there is no history. It simply questions the privileging of identity so that someone is believed to have the truth” (Spivak, Landry, and MacLean 1996a, 27).

Antjie Krog, Nosisi Mpolweni-Zantsi & Kopano Ratele (2008), through their close (re)analysis of the testimony given by Mrs Konile, mother of one of the murdered Gugulethu 7, at the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), also demonstrate the ways silences manifest when one only interprets stories through a decontextualized, Western gaze. As Krog et al. state, most people reading the officially published transcript of Mrs Konile’s testimony would dismiss her seemingly self-obsessed and fragmented story of her “goat dream” as an “incoherent and incomprehensible” testimony (534). This sense is emphasised by a comparison with the testimonies of the other Gugulethu 7 mothers, whose harrowing accounts of their sons’ final moments before apartheid-era security forces assassinated them, are more typical “counter-narratives.” As the authors illustrate, however, the official transcript neglects the vital details and context necessary to tell a more compelling alternative narrative, for example recognising that in Mrs Konile’s Xhosa culture the goat belongs to “a very specific system of cultural symbols” in which this animal is both an ominous sign and a connection with the ancestral world (542). Thus, within an Indigenous framework, Mrs Konile is “logical and resilient” (544) and deeply aware of the devastating effects her son’s death has had on her own life. In these ways, Krog et al. draw attention to the “symptoms, signs, figures, metaphors, and metonymies” (69) that Jacques Derrida (1996) suggests may not be obvious to an ordinary historian.

Fiona Ross (2003), whose work specifically considers the role of women in the TRC, insists that “we need to learn to listen to the silence” because we are not always equipped to interpret painful discourses if the teller is not employing the tools with which we, the audience, are familiar (Graybill 2001, 6). Similarly, in his work on

decentring a persistent, albeit imaginary, Europe, Chakrabarty (2008) calls “for a history that deliberately makes visible, within the very structure of its narrative forms, its own repressive strategies and practices” (45) by focusing seriously on local stories and influences, even if these are those of gods and spirits. By exploring how there might be active agency involved in women’s compliance with patriarchal structures, Saba Mahmood’s (2005) work on Islamic piety groups in Egypt also reveals that interpretation is a complex process that requires us to problematise and displace the certainties and assumptions that we bring to texts, which otherwise limit our ability to understand the terms that people actually use to organise their lives and think about the world. Christina Kreps (2006, 459) further suggests that if we recognise such limitations and liberate our thinking about museums, we also “can recognize museological behaviour in other forms” and perhaps learn lessons from Maori *pataka*, Papua New Guinean *haus tambaran*, and Indonesian *lumbung*, all sacred places concerned with storing precious objects. Like Ross, Chakrabarty, and Mahmood, Kreps argues that respecting other viewpoints is a step towards redressing historical wrongs. This is a standpoint I attempt to maintain throughout my research, aided by adopting a reflexive methodological approach.

2.2.3. Silences and Exclusions

South African scholars, Carolyn Hamilton, Verne Harris and Graeme Reid (2002, 7) are especially cautious about relying on public and more specifically government records, precisely because colonialism and apartheid made them painfully aware that the archive is always “being added to and subtracted from, and...is porous to societal processes and discourses.” So prolific are the exclusions from South Africa’s collections that Bhekizizwe Peterson (2002, 31) articulates the challenge as being to “find, assemble, catalogue and elucidate as much as possible of this material” so that it can be brought “into play in the public or institutional orbit.” This is one of the challenges I try to meet in my sixth chapter.

Derrida (1996) explores this inherent ability of cultural institutions to eliminate, to forget, in *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*. At the same time as incorporating, producing and conserving—which Derrida terms “the *archive drive*” (emphasis in original)—the archive, like other collecting institutions, destroys through a “possibility of a forgetfulness,” or “death drive” (19). This is the inherent paradox of a collection. The death drive is not limited merely to “repression,” which, drawing

on Freudian psychoanalysis, Derrida explains as “unconscious,” but also encompasses “suppression”—a “second censorship”—where repression is impossible but displacement is not; “forgetting” (28) processes range from deliberate exclusion to misunderstood misrepresentation.

Either way, the archive silences, but Derrida’s argument about displacement suggests that traces of these voices might sometimes be located elsewhere within it. Yet, we must heed Hamilton et al.’s (2002, 9) caution against the notion that we can “fill gaps” in the archive, since pursuing that activity would suggest the archive can be something whole when in fact the archive itself is simply a “sliver.” Indeed, Derrida (1996, 64) does ask instead “How can [we] claim to prove an *absence* of archive?” For his answer, he draws on Freud and his “intention to analyze...all kinds of symptoms, signs, figures, metaphors, and metonymies that attest” to do precisely this, even if they are not evident to the “ordinary historian.” Doing this requires an almost “geological or archaeological excavation” (22) of the archive. Any historian must, however, recognise an “incompleteness of the archive” and that that which is absent, as much as that which is present, ensures a “certain determinability of the future” (52). In this way the archive is perhaps its most “violent” (78) since in forgetting injustices of the past, it ensures, to an extent, that these will be repeated in future.

2.3. Developing Alternative Narratives: Challenging the Double Bind of Colonialism

Said ([1993] 1994) persuasively argues that “the power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism” (xiii). Imperialism’s greatest victory was, perhaps, creating an acceptance that we have no option but to depend on such “assertive authority” as embodied in the characters in Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*—Kurtz, the white man in the jungle, or Marlow, yet another white man—because the system has “simply eliminated” all alternatives, making them effectively “unthinkable” (Said [1993] 1994, 26). For Said, then, imperialism created a situation where it was almost impossible to conceive of another paradigm for knowing either Europe or its colonies. Yet, accepting that other narratives can co-exist within these slivers and silences is key for his work and for mine. As he points out, an Algerian intellectual may remember his country’s colonial past through military attacks on villages during

the liberation war, whereas a French counterpart who lived through that time might instead focus on cities or schools built by his countrymen (Said [1993] 1994, 11).

What Said does not advocate, however, is replacing one narrative with another, of operating within any paralysed perspective. But it is not only Europeans or Westerners who have propagated this binary colonial framework, argues Mudimbe (1988): African intellectuals, especially those educated in a colonial system, are equally culpable. As such, in postcolonial Africa, a colonial sentiment that “all that is European is civilized; all that is African is barbarous” was substituted with “all that is African is civilized and beautiful” (169). Negritude, as a celebration of “African otherness” and “the intellectual and emotional sign of opposition to the ideology of white supremacy” (93)—what Fanon ([1967] 2017) explained as its “antithesis in terms of antiracist symbols”—is perhaps the most pertinent example of this paradox, where resistance is staged from within the very dichotomous system that negated it in the first place. According to Mudimbe, this should not, however, be surprising since many African leaders were educated in a Western system so that, consequently, “their thought is at the crossroads of Western epistemological filiation and African ethnocentrism” (1988, 185).

Said ([1993] 1994) is also insistent that alternative narratives not be reduced to essentialising narratives. He rejects nativism, and the nationalism to which it gives rise, as a serious alternative to imperialism since “to leave the historical world for the metaphysics of essences like negritude, Irishness, Islam, or Catholicism is to abandon history for essentializations that have the power to turn human beings against each other” (276). Quoting Wole Soyinka’s (1990) criticism of negritude, Said ([1993] 1994, 276) notes that to continue framing an understanding of the world as “European versus African,” regardless of which viewpoint you take, is to accept “the dialectical structure of European ideological confrontations...borrowed from the very components of its racist syllogism.” Given that those resisting colonialism often relied on the same texts as the colonisers to make their point, such essentialism, Said, argues, was an easy trap to fall into and meant that many liberation movements failed to liberate rather than simply nationalise. Indeed, the fact that the “conceptual framework” for thinking in and about Africa has been a “mirror and a consequence of European hegemony” is merely proof of the dominance of an imperial ideology whose “ultimate sanction and expression” is, according to Gramsci, “profound

cultural supremacy” as much as superior “force or wealth” (Mudimbe 1988, 185). The challenge, then, is dismantling the “double bind” of colonialism, where merely asking whether a way of thinking is “universal” *or* “African” prevents us from breaking out of the binary way of thinking that gives rise to this question in the first place, that prevents us from decolonising the very foundations of knowledge-producing institutions (Mudimbe 1994, 213). A significant part of my research subsequently focuses on trying to avoid this double bind.

2.3.1. Collaborative Knowledge and Tokenism

An inherent risk of such dichotomous knowledge systems is that both ‘sides’ become homogenised, even if one way of thinking ceases to be understood as superior or inferior to the other. Drawing on Raymond William’s thesis that social relations are “fractured,” “relational,” and “fraught,” but that this complexity is lost when studying decolonised or neo-colonial spaces, Spivak (1996a, 292) argues that too often institutions wishing to incorporate marginalised voices identify “token subalterns,” “organic intellectuals...who become spokespersons for subalternity,” individuals who satisfy the establishment’s “desire to fixate on individuals” and position them as “the” subaltern (292). Spivak does acknowledge, however, that it is sometimes advantageous for subaltern groups to present themselves as cohesive, something she reads as “a strategic use of positivist essentialism in a scrupulously visible political interest” (214).

As Laura Peers and Alison Brown (2003) attest, Indigenous groups are increasingly conscious of the methods they must employ to pursue local and international agendas. Spivak’s notion of “strategic essentialism” is, then, a strategy by which minority “subaltern” groups overcome, not overlook, internal differences, because they recognise that it is, at least temporarily, to their advantage to essentialise themselves and simplify their group identity for the purposes of achieving a specific goal. Spivak notes that Fourth World (Indigenous) groups might effectively make claim to cultural conformity in this way to helpfully challenge the problems encountered through postindustrial capitalism. Other scholars (Wright and Mazel 1991, Hamilton and Leibhammer 2016c) question, however, how helpful such strategic essentialism sometimes is, particularly in postapartheid South Africa. Either way, what this tokenism ultimately means is that we can praise ourselves for being “in touch with the speaking subaltern,” but “continue as we are” (Spivak, Landry,

and MacLean 1996a, 292). Conscious of this tendency to homogenise, I structured my fieldwork so that I interacted with numerous and different members of the descendent community, interlocutors who varied in age, gender, economic situation, and education level as a way of working with groups that are simultaneously united and fractured.

The problem with *not* challenging this dichotomous paradigm is that the selected someone, the token, is permitted to move from the discursive margin to the centre, where she receives “special treatment,” but her presence there is only “tolerated” while she “behaves” like those who have invited her in without directly challenging the system (Spivak, Landry, and MacLean 1996a, 37). Duncan Cameron (1997, 25) succinctly summarised this issue of tokenism during his address to the annual South African Museums Association (SAMA) conference, stating that “an invitation to my house to put on some beads and feathers and to perform your tribal dances for my friends is not an invitation to cultural equity or autonomy, and it’s not a solution.” Wanda McCaslin and Denise Breton (2008) are equally scathing about methodologies that seek to include marginalised people in a dominant system but without actually transforming the system itself. For those people historically marginalised by such systems, token inclusion serves simply to “make [their] shackles hurt a little less,” when what people actually need is “to remove the cage” and “build tipis instead” (528 - 529).

2.3.2. Multiple Authorities

Museums are certainly aware that collaborative partnerships are complex and require more than simply incorporating a few labels written by “outsiders” within an exhibition. Borrowing Mary Louise Pratt’s (1991, 1992) notion of the “contact zone,” James Clifford’s (1997) influential “Museums as Contact Zones” essay frames museums as spaces

“of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict.” (Clifford 1997, 192)

His work gave several museologists (Mason 2006, Peers and Brown 2003, Hogsden and Poulter 2012, Witcomb 2003) a framework for (re)considering the ways museums partner with their source communities. Bennett (1998), for example, uses Clifford’s opening description of eavesdropping on a discussion between Tlingit

elders and Portland Museum of Art curators to introduce his reader to the idea that museums might emerge as sites for conversation, where artefacts are prompts for dialogue and contact rather than merely collections of objects to be displayed and looked at. Michael Ames (1999, 41), former director of the University of British Columbia's Museum of Anthropology (UBC-MoA), also concedes that Clifford's essay affected his own thinking on "collaboration" and "partnerships" which had a profound influence on how UBC-MoA produced the *Written in the Earth* and *From Under the Delta* (1994–1996) exhibitions under his tutelage. Despite the challenges and "anxiety" (47) the process entailed, mainly because, at first, staff feared "relinquishing" their assumed right to inquiry and "scholarly privilege" (45), Ames argues that the steps put in place, such as ensuring First Nations communities were framed as exhibition sponsors and had the right to review exhibition material before public dissemination, meant that the relationships that emerged from the process signified a "realignment of power" (45) between the museum and source communities that likely paved the way for other innovative projects, such as the Reciprocal Research Network (RRN) digital repository.

At the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), curators working on the "Our Lives" exhibition, which the museum officially opened in 2004, incorporated similar ideas to develop a "collaborative curation methodology" that the Smithsonian describes as a five-step process: "1) Meeting the community leadership body to invite them to participate; 2) Fieldwork; 3) Drafting content and design presented to community; 4) Revising content submitted to community for final revisions; and 5) Presenting final content and design to the community for first viewing" (Lamar 2009, 150). Moreover, the exhibition curator employed by the NMAI, Cynthia Chavez Lamar, identifies as Native American, suggesting a serious commitment by the museum to partnering with source communities. Indeed, Nancy Rosoff (2003) points out that "direct and meaningful participation of Indian people" in all museum activities is encouraged by the NMAI's mission statement and collections policy. Lamar (2009) admits, however, that she "struggled to maintain a professional distance from the co-curators and communities" (151) since she had a foot in each camp. Significantly, conflict did emerge in several areas, not least when producing the exhibition labels, since the NMAI chose to edit the community's text

so that it conformed to their guidelines on visitor friendly labels; ultimate authority remained with the museum.

It is this reluctance to truly divest authority that concerns Boast (2011) in “Neocolonial Collaboration: Museums as Contact Zones Revisited.” Despite museums agitating for a “pluralistic approach,” Boast argues that “intellectual control has largely remained in the hands of the museum” (58). Also citing Clifford, Boast demonstrates that “contact work in a museum goes beyond consultation and sensitivity, though these are very important. It becomes active collaboration and a *sharing of authority*” (67) (emphasis in citation) whereby museums relinquish actual control of their resources. This is a point also taken up by Srinivasan et al. (2009, 164 - 166), who argues that while museums have taken steps to be more culturally sensitive by incorporating Indigenous voices into “exhibitions, workshop programs and more,” this takes place at the “temporary level:” the more permanent work of the museum is not disrupted since the core museum work, regarded by Srinivasan as the “documentation of objects in a catalog of descriptions,” is still the responsibility of “a relatively small number of specialists and professionals.” More specifically in South Africa, we can return again to McNulty’s (2011) arguments that too often attempts to rectify past inequalities in museums have meant platitudinous gestures that tack non-white histories on to still Eurocentric collections. I structured my own work to intentionally address this problem.

One potential issue with authorising *Other* knowledges is, as Spivak notes, facilitating “the kind of Orientalism that thinks the other side is all unfractioned good,” which too often underlies how development agencies shape their policies towards subaltern and marginalised groups (Spivak, Landry, and MacLean 1996a, 305). The same criticism can be extended to museums. Elizabeth Crooke (2006, 183-184), in her work on museums and communities, similarly warns that despite good intentions at “democratizing history” by bringing community voices into the museum space to challenge curatorial authority and the canon, museums must take care not to simply accept these new voices as “better” but to understand that “new voices will often be just as partial as the old.” Kreps (2006, 470) echoes this caveat that a more inclusive museum does not mean simply “succumbing to extreme cultural relativism” or “a new, reverse exclusivity to replace the old exclusivity.”

Yet even that old exclusivity and canonical authority should not, Stoler (2009) argues, be seen as representative of a cohesive, homogenous group. As her exploration of Dutch colonial archival documents reveals, even those people officially tasked with governing and documenting the Dutch East Indies—the colonisers—did not always agree on policies towards family, language, or homeland i.e., “reason” was neither wholly “pervasive nor persuasive” (58). Fragments of this discontent and disagreement still linger in the archive. Stoler’s sage observation is that too often students of colonialisms turn their attention towards reading “against the grain” of “colonial conventions,” an activity that rests on a precarious assumption that “we know those scripts” (50) and what it is was that the colonial state wanted. It is a sentiment iterated by Eithne Nightingale and Deborah Swallow (2003, 69) who question whether a focus on marginality means those at the centre are left “unexamined and unchanged” so that necessary transformation at the heart and centre of the institution fails to take place. Webb Keane (2011), in considering how Protestantism affects our understanding of subjects and objects in the West, also suggests we would do better to problematise notions of agency within our own society, the answers to which cannot be found only through studying our encounters with “others.”

This is an important point, and one that I bore in mind when analysing the knowledge already recorded in the SAM’s museum catalogue. While accepting Said’s ([1978] 2003) conclusion that individuals cannot be detached entirely from their class, set of beliefs, or social position, “from the circumstances of life” (10), and that those individuals working previously in museums who selected items from a “different” culture—be it Oriental or African—for inclusion in museum collections, who decided which information was worthy of recording about these items in the catalogue, or who determined which story to tell by using them in an exhibition, were not making nonpolitical, impartial decisions, despite any intentions to do so, this does not mean that all knowledge contained in any museum catalogue produced within a colonial framework simply reflects a single colonial narrative. Nor does it mean that we should “jettison” works by authors, artists or curators whose works normalise “white, privileged, insensitive, complicit” views; instead, Said, like Stoler, suggests we should “deal” with them as part of our evidence and deal with as much evidence as possible so that we can read both what is and is not there (Said [1993]

1994, 115). I suggest this approach should be applied to museum catalogues, here, historical colonial records and interpretations should not be abandoned altogether in favour of alternatives but should be presented instead as evidencing worldviews at that time. Understanding the connection between author (or registrar, or curator) and society, Said ([1993] 1994, 13) argues, “makes them *more* interesting and *more* valuable” “because of their *worldliness*, because of their complex affiliations with their real setting.”

Identifying the problem of colonialism in terms of exclusion and marginalisation is not, of course, synonymous with finding a solution to it. As Jørgensen’s (2010) study of book reviews on Tuhiwai Smith’s work, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* suggests, there is an inherent paradox, whereby uncovering the problem in certain ways risks reinforcing the constructed dichotomy between “us” and “them” that gave rise to the problem in the first place. Jørgensen argues that the reviewers seem to reveal so-called Western knowledge as something more suspicious and in need of deconstruction, and so emphasise the “legitimacy” of dichotomous “classical” Indigenous knowledge (323). The reviewers, in privileging Smith’s “Indigenous” identity, likewise lock the debate into a framework of ethnic identity from which it is difficult to escape. If scrutinising a colonial paradigm from this position, there is also a tendency to portray “Indigenous knowledge” as inherently “better” (326) by virtue of it being produced by an ethnically Indigenous person. Despite laudable intentions to the contrary, such valorisation of Indigenous knowledge does not move beyond an “us” and “them” paradigm.

Reinforcing the dichotomy between Western and Indigenous knowledge in this way also means non-Indigenous voices are (self) “circumscribed” since there is a sense that anyone not *inside* the group “risks reproducing imperial justice and perhaps...should rather keep quiet altogether” (Jørgensen 2010, 322). This is not, however, what Tuhiwai Smith (1999) herself advocates, since she does see a role for non-Indigenous people in the wider decolonising project, although she recognises that some more radical Indigenous scholars would say otherwise. Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (2008, 6) suggest that non-Indigenous researchers working with marginalised groups might consider themselves “fellow travellers of sorts” committed to decolonising the academy from the inside by “construct[ing] stories embedded in the landscapes through which they travelled” (6) but should not,

crucially, appropriate the stories of Indigenous people as their own, nor forget their outsider, privileged status. Similarly, Said ([1993] 1994, 35) insists that the belief that “only formerly colonial subjects can understand colonial experience” or that “only women can understand feminine experience” would be “an inadmissible contradiction.” Like Jørgensen, I also reject an analysis of history based around exclusions as unhelpful in tackling a shared problem.

A more mutually satisfying approach might be found, Jørgensen suggests, in Sandra Harding’s (2004) standpoint theory. While Harding acknowledges that “different positions in the social system involve specific experiences” and these experiences “may be converted into critical knowledge,” she delivers two important caveats to this conclusion: “there is no *automatic* conversion of experience and identity into critical knowledge...that knowledge is produced from a marginalised position is no guarantee that it undermines the dominant perspective” (emphasis my own); and “critical knowledge is not the exclusive privilege of marginalised groups;” what is important, then, is that “people can learn to use other perspectives than the ones immediately available from their position” (Jørgensen 2010, 327). There is a need to constantly question, critique and discuss the legitimacy of all knowledge produced, regardless of the position from which it is produced, otherwise we risk disabling the discussion.

2.3.3. New Classifications

Mudimbe (1994), in his later work *The Idea of Africa*, explores more specifically how these knowledge production practices are translated through museum objects. In spaces like the Berlin Museum of Antiquities, Harvard’s Peabody museums, and The Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Mudimbe claims ethnology and colonialism pronounced their shared aim of “converting overseas territories to the self and imagination of the West” (60 - 61) by presenting objects as expressions of primitive pasts so that overseas territories became understood as the West’s negative. Indeed, he argues, displaying these objects in ethnographic museums rather than art galleries, and generating debates around whether or not there was such a thing as African art, meant the West was able to impose supposedly universal art history methods to its analyses of these objects and so find them wanting without actually considering whether *the methods themselves* were in fact problematic and limited.

Moreover, he highlights how the ways in which objects are displayed affects their perceived value: “ethnographic” objects that are crowded into museum showcases and accompanied by lengthy labels attesting to their use and meaning are consistently appraised as less financially valuable than “art” objects displayed with little text and in more spacious surroundings (Mudimbe 1994, 63). In this understanding, Mudimbe seems to argue that the notion of “Art” is constructed and so there is nothing inevitable about African art being critically devalued, apart from the fact that it suits the West to do so. This is not to say, of course, that objects never move from one category to another: many artefacts from Africa that were once considered merely craft pieces have recently been reclassified by museums as “art” and now hang in those spacious gallery surroundings to which Mudimbe alludes. It is a practice Iziko also follows in South Africa.

The issue, of course, is that it is the *museum* that has exerted authority to alter the status of these artefacts, even though we must understand that the museum itself has been influenced by wider questions of taste, politics and markets. As Clifford’s (1997) record of the conversation between the Tlingit elders and Portland Art Museum demonstrates, the elders were not satisfied with re-cataloguing the collected objects as “art” since they saw them rather as records, history and law “inseparable from myths and stories expressing ongoing moral lessons with current political force” (191), suggesting that merely reclassifying objects and bestowing them with a status equivalently revered in Western circles will not, on its own, necessarily be seen as a decolonising move by the source community.

Seeing these objects as “traces of something else,” Mudimbe (1994, 64) asserts that their original context is “incommensurable” with what they are supposed to signify in a display case or hanging on the wall. He invites critics to “decode and publicise” (64) precisely the techniques and languages that museums use to silence and so stabilise these objects (or artworks). Fixing works in this way means their inexorable “two spectacular meanings”—their “functional, utilitarian dimension” and “materiality”—are overlooked (68). Subsequently, the objects’ abilities to “speak” (to the initiated) of continued traditions and “successive transformations”—their “archival” dimension—is denied (68). Without recognising this dimension or linking these objects with oral histories and traditions capable of situating them within a

specific time, the objects are systematically removed from the “chronological” frame so revered by museums (69).

2.4. The Digital Context

My third research question considers whether the digital context makes it more possible for museums to partner effectively with descendent communities to decode and publicise these silencing practices while simultaneously returning an item’s archival dimension on their terms. Can we achieve this discursive shift simply by making collections digitally available online? A significant number of digital theorists argue that for communities and individuals more marginalised by histories of colonialism and the industrial age, digital technologies, and particularly the Internet, offer new ways of reconfiguring how and what we know about the world, and how we document this. More than twenty years ago, Arjun Appadurai (1996) suggested that access to technology, media, and mass communication could facilitate individual political agency and an ability to transform discourses. Francis Cairncross (1997) even speculated that the death of distance in cyberspace would ultimately bring about an end to our misunderstandings and war. More recently, Frances Fukuyama declared that access to digital technologies would bring about a “digital sublime” and the realisation of liberal democracy (Cited in Mosco 2005, 62). In its earlier days, feminist euphoria, embodied by Donna Haraway’s (1991) cyborg metaphor, was based around digital technologies that blur the lines between human and machine, that were less about “brawn” and more about “brain,” and based on “networks” not “hierarchies,” that seemingly made them the solution to transforming gender relations (Wajcman 2010, 147).

Advocates for the possibilities offered by new media can also be found in the Global South, including Africa. Media theorist Okoth Fred Mudhai (2011) extols their potential to act as instigators of social change in a way that “moves towards democratization”; others perceive them as “tools to leapfrog development,” or as “the new talking drums of Africa” (Wasserman 2011, 3, Rosenthal 2017). Schech (2002, 19), while more sceptical of the political dimension of knowledge disseminated through the Internet, does concede that its decentralised nature makes it more difficult to censor or control and so might give rise to “emancipatory praxis.” Martin Hall (2000, 464) suggests that these somewhat utopian views have, in fact, disproportionately influenced the South African government’s stance on using the

Internet as part of a position on open governance, epitomised by the 1996 White Paper on Telecommunications policy.⁸

That the digital *museum* might be a utopian alternative to museum practices of exclusion is a point raised and critiqued by Anthropologists Geismar (2018) and Elizabeth Povinelli (2011). Indeed, Povinelli (2011, 153) suggests that it suits the “dream” of the postcolonial archive whereby anyone entering the “honeycombed” library, can do more than find a space on the shelf; they can build a new *type* of shelf, perhaps a digital shelf. Certainly, Alison Griffiths, a film and media scholar, explains the attraction of new media to museums in terms of their “promise to democratise knowledge, to offer contextual information on exhibits, and to boost museum attendance” (Cited, Henning 2006, 302). Joel Taylor (2015, 1) similarly recognises democratisation of heritage as “an aspiration” of institutions working to make it digitally accessible.

There are undoubtedly possibilities for making museum collections more accessible to people, superficially at least, using digital technologies. Given the large number of objects that museums have acquired over the years, many institutions divided their collections into research and display items. Bridging this gap is, Michelle Henning (2006, 309) suggests, one of the most exciting possibilities of new media and it is through new media objects that visitors can access more objects “according to preference,” thus supporting arguments about access and decolonisation. She argues that an absence of visible curators and the addition of automated searching and database structures suggests that objects are not “limited to the part given them in the context of a particular narrativized display” and are accompanied by more extensive contextual text than given in exhibition labels, meaning “deeper and more diverse engagement between the visitors and the museum” (309).

Even those institutions most closely associated with imperialism, including the British Museum, have expressed a desire to make their collections more participatory through their online catalogues and web presence, which offer opportunities for users to comment on blog posts that act as “a platform for discussion” (British Museum). The Royal Ontario Museum (ROM), Canada, also encourages comments through its

⁸ This White Paper conceived of a universal service agency that would be capable of redressing apartheid’s imbalances by countering a private sector tendency to draw resources away from the disadvantaged.

website and social media platforms with the purpose “to build connections with [their] communities through conversations” (ROM n.d.). These activities seem to support South African anthropologist Shahid Vawda’s sense that digital spaces can in fact “provide the forum” by which objects “can be drawn in a closely correlated discussion and debate” (Omar et al. 2012, 9). My question, as related to my research, is who can actually access these digitised collections and so participate in these forums and debates? Do the descendent communities enjoy equal access to these new digital collections and so have the same opportunities to shape a postcolonial narrative?

2.4.1. Dystopian Digital Infrastructures

Indeed, for every digital utopianist, as Geismar (2018) reiterates, there is a digital dystopianist emphasising the ways digital infrastructures perpetuate, as well as disrupt, inequalities. Core to this is the digital divide concept for which various definitions exist. In my fieldwork, I attempt to explore the multi-faceted nature of this concept as it relates to the descendent communities with which I worked. The literature on this notion, reviewed below, gave me a starting point for considering which aspects of the digital divide I should begin exploring in the South African context through discussions with community members and, less explicitly, through participant observation practices.

As early as 2001, Manuel Castells recognised a digital division in terms of inequality of access to the Internet, which Jan Van Dijk (2005) later refined as the gap between those who have and do not have access to computers and the Internet, a gap Jeffrey James (2003) sees as reflecting the economic gulf between rich and poor countries. As the following sections highlight, a lack of technical infrastructure in terms of connectivity and a reliable power supply, unequal material access to computers and software, issues around using tools for which people do not have the necessary technical or language training, and limited access to intellectual content due to high subscription costs and paywalls are all touted as principle reasons for the digital divide. It is a disparity in Africa that Christian Fuchs and Eva Horak (2008) argue comes in economic, political, cultural, and social forms.

Lorna Abungu, who started investigating how the digital divide might impact museums in Africa in 2002, perceives it primarily as an infrastructure issue. Although presenting a fairly positive portrayal of the impact digital technologies

may have on Africa's museums, at the time of writing Abungu is somewhat despondent about the limited Internet access for Africans. She acknowledges that most African countries did already have Internet access in 2002, but that the "poor quality" of the "underlying telecommunications system" in many African countries means people still could not really use it (2002, 33). Abungu states that, "out of 357 known museums throughout the African continent (including the Indian Ocean islands), only seventy-five have – on an institutional level – at least basic Internet access for email," which she sees as evidence that "more effort is needed to bridge the 'Digital Divide' in the heritage sector in Africa" (33). Given predictions that there will be more than 930 million mobile subscriptions, mostly internet enabled, in sub-Saharan Africa by 2019, there is a possible case for arguing that the technological divide will soon be inconsequential (Smith 2014, Rosenthal 2017). Frank Louis Kwaku Ohemeng and Kwaku Ofori-Adarkwa (2014, 317) do persuasively maintain that mobile devices, supported by the Mobile Government Policy (m-government) is indeed "imperative" for bridging the digital divide in Ghana and possibly other African countries. Yet, as I argue in my seventh chapter, cell phone technology offers another plethora of challenges and opportunities for museums in South Africa.

Karen Worcman's (2002) understanding of development projects might explain her more nuanced interpretation of the challenges faced when conducting digitisation projects with marginalised communities, particularly in terms of infrastructure. For example, she goes beyond highlighting the disparity in global Internet access to argue that even if people are given the tools to use technology, this means nothing if they are not trained to use them, do not consider them as adding benefit to their lives, or cannot see how they fit with the values of their community. These are also issues that emerge from Anne Webb and Ineke Busken's (2009) research projects into women and ICTs in twelve countries across Africa. As they demonstrate, there are inherent problems associated with any framework that focuses on the promise of ICTs without first understanding the potentially ongoing and divisive inequalities associated with them, not least in terms of gender.⁹

⁹ In the context of Webb et al.'s (2009) research, empowerment is broadly understood by GRACE (Gender Research in Africa into ICTs for Empowerment) as the "role played by ICTs in expanding the assets and capabilities of women...Assets include both financial assets and capabilities, the latter

In a research project by Webb et al. (2009), limited time due to domestic constraints and expectations that domestic work is women's work, is cited as a prime factor affecting the gender skew in students using the computer lab at the University of Zimbabwe. According to Buhle Mbambo-Thata, Elizabeth Mlambo and Precious Mwatsiya (2009), female students comprised just 13% of the lab's users. This is in spite of a seemingly democratic "first come, first served" access policy promoted by the lab. While many of the women interviewed applauded this open access policy as "fair" (11), the researchers found that it led to a significant amount of pushing and shoving in which these physically weaker women were the losers and so were denied access to the limited number of computers. This, combined with the smaller windows of time available for women to compete for computers in the first place, goes some way to unravelling the gender disparity in users.

In rural Mozambique, a scarcity of time is likewise an explanation for limited uptake of ICTs by women. This situation is compounded further by women's poor education levels, illiteracy, language barriers, and entrenched beliefs that ICTs will not bring immediate and material benefits to their lives.¹⁰ Of the 74 respondents participating in Gertrudes Macueve et al.'s (2009) semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and life histories, many did value learning new skills and could recognise the potential of ICTs, but did not see them as sufficiently valuable at that point to take time out from managing their market stalls or farms, activities that provide the financial means necessary for supporting their families on an immediate and daily basis. As such, the researchers concluded that until the socioeconomic conditions of the women could be improved so that they had "free" time, and until computer technologies could be presented as more relevant to these women's daily lives, the potential of ICTs for empowerment remains limited. It seems hard to imagine this already marginalised group using their very limited time to produce digital knowledge for cultural heritage institutions' online platforms, unless there were very attractive incentives. Paul Basu (2015) expresses similar scepticism that people of the streets of Freetown would use their airtime to access the digital platform he designed with the National Museum in Sierra Leone. Paradoxically, these people's

meaning the ability to carry out valuable acts and to achieve or reach valuable states of being, dependent on each individual and his/her context" (Webb and Buskens 2009, 22).

¹⁰ In Manhica, one of Mozambique's most rural provinces, the poverty rate was estimated at 60% in 2003, and 60% of women and girls over 5 years old had never been to school.

stories may be exactly those that the museum will want to incorporate if it is to build a truly postcolonial collection.

A very practical barrier—infrequent electricity supply—explains the limited use of ICTs by women in Lucingweni, rural South Africa. As Jocelyn Muller (2009) explains, the disparity between urban and rural electricity supplies—90% of rural Africa has no constant power supply—manifests as a gender disparity: urbanisation means more rural households are headed by women as men migrate to cities, which leads, in turn, to increased domestic responsibilities for women, who care for sick, elderly and young children, leaving them with fewer opportunities to move to cities themselves. As such, rural women are disproportionately affected by energy poverty. These migration patterns also mean that urban men are more likely than women to be exposed to ICTs and to have the purchasing power to buy or access them. Thus, the gender divide is perpetuated. In this case, however, there seems scope to hypothesise that smartphone penetration in rural areas might make energy poverty a more manageable barrier in future, providing supply is sufficiently accessible to charge them. What all these projects emphasise is the folly of assuming that making digital tools and resources openly available is sufficient to ensure that they will be adopted in an empowering way, and so close the digital divide. Drawing on this more nuanced examination, my own research aims to explore if there are, in fact, more empowering ways that museums can use technology to bridge this aspect of the digital divide by either overcoming or circumventing these barriers, quite possibly by considering alternative tools and systems.

2.4.2. Digital Culture (Mis)appropriated

Elizabeth Buchanan's (1999) critique of the digital divide is less a critique of the practicalities than of the information flows between the Global North and the Global South.¹¹ She sees this as potentially reinforcing the “cultural domination of the South by the North” through “information dissemination and commoditization,” which Smith, in *Geopolitics of Information* (1980), explained as fuelling “inequality, and suppression of cultural uniqueness and traditional values” (194).

¹¹ Although this work is somewhat dated, as evidenced by her use fixed telephone lines rather than cell phones to measure the impact of the information economy, her article raises important ethical considerations that persist today.

While Buchanan's concerns over information flows are certainly valid, her pre-occupation with direction from North to South does, to some extent, deny agency to those in the Global South. She notes "the continual neglect of developing nations as *potential* information suppliers" (emphasis in original), yet seemingly overlooks the fact that academics in the Global South, such as Premesh Lalu (2007), Peter Lor, and Johannes Britz (2004), are actually more concerned about information that *is* produced in the Global South flowing to the Global North in ways that allows the North to appropriate this resource in a fashion mirroring colonialism (Buchanan 1999, 197). Indeed, Geismar (2018) refers to the "promiscuous circulation" (xix) of digital objects to emphasise how readily available they might become. Meredith Blake and Supriyah Singh (2012) are particularly concerned about who consumes the digital objects produced from and by marginalised cultures. One of their interviewees from Papua New Guinea, for example, reported that on seeing one of their Tubuan group images on a "lap-lap" (sarong), his father remarked, "You know they have ruined our culture by doing that" (101). As Blake and Singh point out, Indigenous communities have a long experience of their culture being abused and misappropriated and so worry that the presence of images of their cultural heritage online makes this more possible.

2.4.3. Digital Protection

In some instances, however, digitisation projects are understood as the best way to prevent this kind of misappropriation by the Global North. India's ambitious Traditional Knowledge Digital Library is a perfect example of this. Developed as a "collective intellectual commons," it will comprise 30 million pages of digital knowledge on India's ancient medical systems that cannot be patented or sold (Cannella and Manueline 2008, 50). Vinod Kumar Gupta, responsible for leading the project, sees it as a bulwark against decades of biopiracy by the West, whereby 80% of the 5000 patents issued by the US Patent Office in the year 2000 were for plants of Indian origin (Biswas 2005). More recently, Leiden University made hundreds of medicinal plant drawings collected in Sri Lanka during the seventeenth century openly available online as way of ensuring Sri Lankans can also access this material (Keulemans 2018). While these projects do not involve museums, they do attest to a more positive base of support for using digital tools in ways that empower marginalised communities by interrupting one-way information flows.

Howard Morphy (2015) is similarly more supportive of using open access to facilitate Indigenous community goals around recovering cultural heritage. While acknowledging that protocols restricting access to museum collections permit Indigenous groups a degree of agency that they have previously been denied, he argues that using protocols to mediate relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians is fraught with complexities. Too often, the assumptions underlying protocols, such as the perceived significance of secrecy in creating hierarchies of knowledge and the notion that knowledge is separated by gender, undermine the diversity within Indigenous Australian society and, worryingly, create an illusion of equality between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians that does not exist. His experience of working with the Yolngu community in Australia's Northern Territory leads him to conclude that the easiest way to facilitate the digital return of visual heritage is through open access to digital collections. As he points out, the nature of Western collecting practices means the collections of Yolngu and other Indigenous group's cultural heritage are often dispersed across several institutions and continents. If this material is openly available at minimal cost, it is far easier for the community to collate its archive. Once the community has access to this material, it can then develop ways to manage it and provide warnings alongside sensitive images, particularly of deceased people, so that users have a choice about whether or not they wish to access them.

The literature on this issue of access protocols and cultural appropriation certainly demonstrates that there is no singular Indigenous solution. It is thus imperative to explore each context. In the absence of any compelling research on Zulu community attitudes to digital items and information, my third research question aims to address this particular context as a way of overcoming this gap. Considering whether technology can play a meaningful role in this process of decolonisation means exploring how museums might produce and disseminate digital knowledge in ways that do not reproduce colonial relations and disparities of access to and use of resources. Understanding how the communities rather than the museum determine what kinds of access and sharing will benefit them is one possible way of dismantling colonial-style relationships. My research explores these ideas by focussing more specifically on museum objects as resources with which descendent

communities potentially have numerous cultural, social, spiritual, and economic relationships.

2.5. Ontologies of Objects and Things

Anthropologists, particularly those concerned with material culture and materiality, have likewise grappled more specifically with ontological and epistemological arguments in terms of how we both produce knowledge around objects, or “things.” These ideas are very helpful for thinking through how we construct and perceive both analogue and digital museum objects and the different types of relationships people may have with them, depending on their ontological viewpoint. Certainly, my fieldwork discussions demanded that I consider several objects, including a Zulu “pot” and “medicine container,” within an alternative ontology so that I could appreciate their significance to the descendent communities, particularly in terms of these items’ relationships with the ancestors. This gave me scope to consider how the current cataloguing system fails to embody this by overlooking aspects of the object’s materiality and biography. Drawing on the body of theoretical work explored below permitted me to frame this idea within a wider, evolving discussion about subject-object relationships in both an analogue and digital context without lapsing into a West and “Other” dichotomy.

Marilyn Strathern’s (1988) exploration of gender relations and gift exchanges in Melanesian economies played a significant role in prompting a reconsideration of such Western dichotomies as “society” and “individual.” She concludes that in Melanesia, objects are not merely *representative* of relationships between people; “objects are created...out of persons” (171). Constructed in this way, objects can then mediate relationships between persons as they circulate between them. Those mediating items carry the influence one person hopes to have over another so that this circulation engenders “mutual enchainment” (178), which seemingly undermines a Western understanding that objects are without any form of agency.

Influenced by Strathern, Alfred Gell (1998) pursued this issue further in *Art and Agency*. The anthropological theory of art that he develops depends on accepting that “*persons* or ‘social agents’ are, in certain contexts, substituted for by *art objects*” (5). For Gell, both persons and things can be agents. While artists and patrons act as *primary* agents, their intentions are effected through objects and things, meaning that these entities act as *secondary* agents, since they also have real effects on and in the

world. How effective an object is depends on qualities such as its design and colour, qualities that, as Keane (2003), Nancy Munn (1986), and Miller (2005) explain, are inextricably bundled with other qualities whose value, use, and relevance change with context. Simon Tanner (2018) reinforces this point about varying and various values more broadly in his own work on strategic practices.

Matthew Hull's (2012) research on materiality and graphic artifacts in Pakistan demonstrates quite clearly how significant local context is for understanding the importance of material form. In some cases, such as the "gold flecked or gold sprinkled" (90) petitions presented to royals, these are more universally understood as a way of enhancing a document's perceived importance and flattering the high status of the receiver, both of which might make the petition more successful. In other situations, understanding the significance of the material form first requires more nuanced and local knowledge of the cultural context; for example, the ubiquity of Roman-script typewriters in Pakistan means a petition handwritten in English seemingly indicates the low status of the petitioner (meaning his petition is more easily dismissed) whereas handwritten Urdu petitions receive greater attention precisely because Urdu typewriters are known to be less accessible.

The fact that *agency* is likewise "relational and context-dependent" is paramount to understanding Gell's theory (1998, 22). As he points out, some societies believe objects have divine origins, or have made themselves and so are their own agents. Abelam yams, for example, are understood in some cases as growing themselves. The yam growers may assist the yams to grow by hollowing out the earth or refraining from sexual intercourse, but the power to grow is inherent in yams and for this reason they are "cultivated ceremonially and exhibited" (41). Kreps' (2006, 463) work in Indonesia correspondingly supports this idea, since in many communities there, objects are perceived as independently powerful and capable of "assuming new identities." Among the Nalik community of New Ireland, Papua New Guinea, Graeme Were (2014, 137), building on Strathern and Susanne Küchler's ethnographies, also reveals how *malangan* carvings—sculptures that played important ceremonial roles in the complex set of funerary rites in precolonial times—are understood as possessing "hidden powers" so strong that they are regarded as "dangerous heritage" by the Nalik people.

For Gell's (1998) notion of agency to work, we must accept that for any agent there is a patient, and for any patient there is an agent; one exercises agency while the other, momentarily, is acted on by this agent. As his example of a broken bike illustrates, neither agent nor patient status is attached to a person or thing in a fixed manner. When the bike breaks down, it is, rationally or otherwise, understood as the agent since its breaking down "is believed to happen because of an 'intention' lodged in the person or thing which initiates the causal sequence" (17) and has an effect on the bike owner as patient. Conversely, when the bike owner strikes the bike, he acts as the agent and the broken bike becomes the patient who is acted upon. Complemented by other examples of the ways agent-patient relationships play out in the Puri Jagganath idol, Trobriand flotillas, Ndembu carving figurines, and Michelangelo's slaves, Gell's work gives us room to contemplate both Western and non-Western objects as fully implicated in our social networks, be they analogue or digital.

Latour's (1999) work on purification further dismantles the subject-object dichotomy that has been so central to both modernist-realist and postmodernist-relativist epistemologies. Rejecting a drive to distinguish clearly between the world of agency and that of natural determinism, Latour refers instead to humans and nonhumans and explores the way each exerts agency in relationship with the other to articulate a new proposition or "hybrid actor" (180) that blurs the boundary between them. His discussion about gun control in America is a clear example of this. Revealing the slogans proffered by parties on each side of the debate as reflecting a materialist argument (Guns kill people, i.e., nonhuman agent) versus a sociological one (Guns don't kill people; people kill people i.e., human agent), Latour's argument is that this dichotomy oversimplifies the debate. This split ignores the fact of "goals translation," whereby, when human and nonhuman are combined, a new goal is realised that may not correspond to either the human or nonhuman agent's original intention; "you are different with a gun in your hand; the gun is different with you holding it" (179). Considered as propositions, neither gun nor citizen are fixed as either subject or object. In this situation, neither people nor guns kill, thus responsibility for the outcome is shared. Latour thus concludes that all artifacts incorporate social relations; hence, social structures that deny the role played by nonhumans are deeply flawed.

One point on which Latour's work might reasonably be criticised is the way he flattens the problem by suggesting there is a fundamental, universal ontology. He effectively quashes alternative, Indigenous worldviews, since there is little room in his argument for perspectives that credit nonhuman actors with possessing independent agency. Indigenous scholars, including Zoe Todd (2014a), are particularly critical of this universal flattening. At the same time, we should bear in mind Keane's (2011, 3-4) concern that any search for local agency, or attempt to consider "the native point of view," does not become a simple "antidote" to earlier, derogatory assumptions about "timeless" natives; this kind of approach also fails to move us towards a more nuanced understanding of subject-object and agency. Here, we can see the application of Mudimbe and Spivak's arguments about counternarratives to thinking about objects.

Annette Weiner (1994) *does* skilfully attend to the similarities as well as differences in how objects are treated in other societies without offering one as a remedy to the other. She challenges a perception that in so-called primitive societies, material culture is devoid of ownership and is thus easily transferable in a gift-exchange economy, asserting instead that an object's value is determined by ownership in *many* societies, not just capitalist ones. Her commitment to a comparative approach allows her to draw resemblances between an item such as Cardinal Wolsey's hat, held in a European museum, and chiefly shells involved in kula exchange in the Trobriands, or fine Samoan mats. Each of these objects, Weiner argues, acquires "charisma" that lasts beyond one person's ownership, making them culturally "dense" (394) with meaning and value. In each case, the important goal for society, be it Western or non-Western, is to keep the dense object out of circulation. This amounts to Weiner's paradox of "keeping-while-giving" whereby value is created by trying to keep possessions out of exchange in the face of obligations to engage in exchanges. The economic and political advantages associated with resisting exchange are, Weiner concludes, equally poignant in capitalist and non-capitalist societies: acquiring a dense chiefly shell and assuming the prestige that accompanies such possession in a kula exchange system is as unattainable for most people in this society as acquiring an original Picasso from a New York art dealer. As such, ownership of these highly prized possessions matters in each cultural context,

especially if we accept Weiner's assertion that all items enter the marketplace or exchange systems at some point.

In this sense, Weiner echoes Appadurai (2009b) and the other authors of *The Social Life of Things*, who demonstrate that most things—including museum objects that tend to be regarded as existing outside a commercial system of value and exchange—have been commoditised at some point in their lives, however briefly. While economic exchange is part of this commodity phase, Appadurai (2009a, 3) argues that “economic exchange creates value” and that “value is embodied in commodities that are exchanged.” Moreover, and here Appadurai draws on Georg Simmel's work, objects are rarely inherently valuable but are instead deemed so by subjective judgments made about them. Again, these judgements are shaped by dominant discourses at the time. Appadurai further suggests that items that end up as part of museum collections represent a balancing countertendency to that which dissolves links between persons and things “by virtue of their exchange destinies and mutual commensurability” (24). This countertendency is a desire “to restrict, control and channel exchange” that forms the basis of “diversions” whereby objects are removed from an “enclaved zone” to one where exchange is “confined” and normally more profitable, as is the case in museums (25).

Of further interest is Appadurai's (2009a, 41) examination of knowledge and commodities, according to which things represent “complex social forms and distributions of knowledge.” He identifies two crude forms of knowledge: that which goes into the production of the commodity and that which goes into appropriately consuming it. Appadurai, however, counsels against assuming that the first kind of knowledge is more technical and empirical and that the latter is evaluative or ideological; at both ends knowledge can be both technical and interpenetrated with assumptions. As these objects move out of their immediate production environment and through cycles of exchange, Appadurai recognises that “large gaps of knowledge” appear (43). Drawing on Clifford Geertz's account of the Moroccan bazaar, Appadurai shows how the system of circulation and exchange giving rise to these knowledge gaps ensures a situation whereby searching for reliable information is at the heart of an institution, yet it remains exceedingly difficult for people to gain reliable information about people and things. Such concerns are not limited to the West, as Weiner's example of Samoan fine mats suggests. These fine mats—being

dense objects that enable some women to enjoy significant political presence—are inherited within the group, but considered too valuable for exchange outside of it. Given the geographically dispersed nature of Samoan communities today and the subsequent global circulation of these mats, written notes are attached to them to overcome the risk of losing ancestral knowledge and the loss of the object.

Brian Spooner (2009) is likewise concerned about a paucity of particular information on objects that is hidden by a veneer of apparent accessibility. His argument centres on Oriental carpets and the apparent paradox that they are widely available and accessible, but information about them is not, which runs contrary to expectations. Spooner also notes that accounts based on information that *does* exist about Oriental carpets is usually “one-sided” and “informed primarily by the lore of the dealer” rather than those producing them, which has more to do with the history of trade and Western interest than the roles played by all parties (197). Such information serves our purposes, as Spooner argues, but it also means we can deceive ourselves since an “inherent distortion and paucity of the information” (199) allows us to fit the objects to our needs rather than constraining our ideas to the object’s information. Such paucity of information about “African,” and specifically “Zulu,” objects in museums, partly the result of “siloeing” items and documentation, likewise concerns Hamilton et al. (2016b,c) because it makes them merely evidence for a pre-existing colonial argument that Indigenous communities are ahistorical and does not allow them to “speak” on their own terms.¹²

Spooner’s (2009) argument feeds into a consideration about the technology used to produce the carpets. Technology, Spooner asserts, is “interdependent with the dynamic of social interaction, of ways of thinking, and of the natural processes that provide the raw materials” (204). The choices that the carpet weavers make about the technologies they use allow them to express themselves within these constraints. There must be room for innovation in the technology, but not too much, lest the end product be altered beyond recognition. Examining these aspects of the production process—and asking what we don’t know—might offer an opportunity to learn

¹² While I use variations of the term “ahistorical” in this thesis, I do so with scepticism: my suggestion is not that items presented as ahistorical in fact have no history, but rather that colonialism intentionally denied them a historical record because it served colonial interests to represent Indigenous communities as being without a history.

something “about the other end of the continuum” and so begin challenging this perceived scarcity of information (208).

In the same collection of works, Igor Kopytoff (2009, 67) proposes the interesting notion of “biographical expectations” of things. Using the example of Suku huts in Zaire (now Democratic Republic of Congo), Kopytoff demonstrates how some items are expected to assume different identities, or uses, during their lifetimes: a hut initially houses a family and then, as it deteriorates physically, it is used as a hangout, then a kitchen, then a chicken or goat house, and then it is expected to be overrun with termites and collapse completely. If the hut is used in a way that does not correspond to its physical state, this will likely make the community feel uncomfortable and those initiated in this knowledge system will recognise this as a sign of discord. Similarly, MacDonald (2006a) argues, objects used in First Nations’ *potlatch* ceremonies were never intended to be accumulated or preserved, despite so many being appropriated by museums, since the *potlatch* ceremonies involve conscious destruction and “conspicuous dispersal” (81). Susan Crane (2006) likewise argues that museums interrupt the “life trajectories” of objects never intended to last very long and, in doing so, interrupt a more natural process of forgetting. In Western societies, as Kopytoff points out, we also have expectations of great artworks: for a Monet to end up in an incinerator or an inaccessible private collection is seen as a tragedy because it has not fulfilled expectations. What is important to recognise, however, is that these expectations are reflective of “a tangled mass of aesthetic, historical, and even political judgements” (Kopytoff 2009, 67).

While Strathern, Gell, Keane, Hull, Latour, Weiner, Appadurai et al. may not work specifically with digital objects and tools, their theories on object agency, materiality, ownership, expectations, and circulation and exchange remain highly relevant in developing an approach towards understanding alternative and varied conceptions of the ways objects operate in the digital world. Indeed, as Wayne Ngata, Hera Ngata-Gibson, and Amiria Salmond suggest through their work with Maori communities, digital versions of *taonga* (sacred items or treasures) are understood by some Indigenous groups as being imbued with the same power, or agency, as the original object (Ngata, Ngata-Gibson, and Salmond 2012). Miller (2005, 10) also applies his notion that “dialectically” we both produce and are

produced by objects in the digital world in terms of how we interpret our relationship with the Internet. In Trinidad, where he undertakes his own fieldwork, the Internet's performative opportunities means notions of "being Trini" (34) have changed dramatically since its arrival. Thus, he concludes, we cannot speak of Trinidadians appropriating the Internet as if "Trinidadians" and "the Internet" were distinct entities; rather it is through the process of objectification that the two contemporary entities came to be understood. In the same volume, Nigel Thrift (2005) proposes that screens and software, or sapient materialities, mediate our lives by becoming a sort of personal infrastructure. What is significant is the "material anticipation" of the user and that these sapient materialities have consequences, albeit "sometimes unintended consequences," if not "unanticipated" ones (Miller 2005, 34, 38). Such consequences, Miller argues, are a "product of our history of self-regard...part of the history of our materiality" making Thrift's discussion on software comparable with Strathern's one on artifacts (38).

Just as Strathern and subsequent anthropologists have demonstrated that it is no longer possible to imagine developing satisfactory ethnographies if we only analyse subject-object relationships within a traditionally Western framework, we cannot assume that there is a single, universal ontological or epistemological viewpoint from which we can explain all relationships with digital objects and technologies. This is certainly Bell and Kuipers' (2018) contention following their research into how cell phone technology is used worldwide. It seems highly likely that these are equally relational and context-dependent in South African communities; understanding these relations and contexts is indeed one intention of my fieldwork. Appreciating how source communities view such issues as object agency and ownership, both digital and analogue, is also important because it carries ethical implications in terms of how museums treat them. While some museums, such as the Smithsonian NMAI, have respectfully developed collections storage centres whose architecture reflects an ontological understanding that tangible objects are sometimes living entities and so need space to breathe, there is less understanding of how (or whether) communities perceive digital objects as requiring special treatment based on their status within the community.

2.6. Discussion

My literature review draws on works from across numerous disciplines and fields stretching from anthropology, sociology, and history to museum studies, information studies, and postcolonial and subaltern studies. Influenced significantly by Tuhiwai Smith, Foucault, Said, Mudimbe, Chakrabarty, Latour, Stoler, Spivak, Bowker, Star, and Lampland I adopted a postcolonial, feminist standpoint for this thesis according to which knowledge is always situated and contextual, and that systems of cataloguing and classification both reflect and produce a specific way of knowing. Accepting this position gave me a framework for interrogating the SAM's documentation systems as both a product of and productive of the particular colonial context in which the museum operated when collecting ethnographic artefacts as metonyms for Natal Nguni culture. Inspired by these theorists and their analyses of a broader notion of "archive" that incorporates works of colonial literature, museum collections, state archives and classification systems, I read and examined the SAM's own archive to understand and reveal how exactly it constructed knowledge about Indigenous Natal Nguni people through its core cataloguing and classification processes. As well as prompting my first research question, their work also offered historical archival research and genealogy as methods for answering it.

Work by Tuhiwai Smith, Spivak, Said, Chakrabarty, Krog, Ross, and Mudimbe in particular highlighted the apparent absence of alternative archives without the need to accept that these archives cannot, or do not, exist. In many ways, answering my second research question about (re)constructing alternative knowledge on Indigenous cultures meant attempting to develop an alternative archive for "Zulu" material culture, while remaining cognisant of the fact that the literature identifies this task as extremely difficult and problematic, but not impossible. The SAM archive did include traces of alternative narratives that surfaced during my archival research but, just as Spivak and Chakrabarty look elsewhere for subaltern stories, I also looked outside this official archive and so conducted fieldwork with descendent communities as a way of exploring undocumented oral histories and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) that might contribute towards an alternative archive. Their insistence that decolonisation means more than writing a counter narrative meant I always framed my fieldwork discussions as alternatives to the SAM's narrative rather than absolute corrections to it. Cognisant of postcolonial and

subaltern approaches and, specifically, Krog and Ross's warnings that we are not always equipped with the tools to recognise epistemologies and ontologies different from our own, I consciously adopted a reflexive methodological approach throughout my fieldwork as a way of addressing this limitation by recognising my own position.

As the literature suggests, technology does seem to offer ways of differently documenting and producing certain ontologies by constructing databases that are more closely aligned with IKS in terms of how items are conceived, treated and classified. What they also reiterate is that there is no single, universal solution for doing this. Geismar, Horst and Miller's, and Bell and Kuiper's work likewise emphasise how significant the cultural context is for understanding how digital technologies are differently employed in different places. Unlike digital enthusiasts, they do not see technology as a straightforward solution to the complicated challenges of decolonisation. I share their rejection of a digital utopia and of a clean division between analogue and digital worlds. Their research does not, however, extend to the particular KZN cultural context within which I operated. In the absence of extensive existing research on this, I pursued my own similar inquiry through my third research question. Inspired by the anthropological approaches to researching the relationship between digital and culture, particularly through participant observation, I used similar techniques and methods in attempting to answer my final research question, as I discuss in my methodology chapter. Drawing also on Strathern, Gell, Latour, Appadurai, Spooner, Kopytoff, Hull, Were, and Weiner's work on subject-object agencies as ways of working towards interpreting alternative ontologies, I similarly made the SAM's "objects" the focus of my fieldwork discussions so that I could consider how these might challenge current cataloguing and classification systems that embody such alternative ontologies.

3. Chapter 3 – Digital Decolonising Initiatives

3.1. Introduction

There is no universal narrative of a digital utopia or dystopia, but carefully considering the broader cultural contexts in which digital objects and knowledge are produced and disseminated through cataloguing and classification processes does seem to offer possibilities for understanding how it might or might not play a role in decolonising museums. This chapter presents case studies of museums currently using digital tools to facilitate partnership projects with source communities in ways that work towards decolonising relationships between these groups. It bridges the theoretical framework presented in my first chapter with the methodology I pursued to conduct my own research. These museum digitisation projects are, I argue, consistent with work by Said, Mudimbe, and Spivak, since they intentionally aim to challenge colonial epistemologies through the knowledge they produce and the relationships they develop. I drew on many of these ideas and practices to shape my own research methods.

Unsurprisingly, most of these museums are in Canada, the USA, Australia, and New Zealand, countries formerly colonised and settled by Europeans, where issues of marginalised people's rights remain powerfully politicised: in short, places with high museum-mindedness. Indeed, while recognising that digitisation projects are fraught with obstacles, museologists in these countries have persuasively argued that digital resources can, potentially, bring “a range of opportunities” to some of the most marginalised groups by offering to “support and preserve local identities” and even “promote grassroots involvement in creating the infrastructure of devolved governance” (Boast, Bravo, and Srinivasan 2007, 395). These museum examples, in conjunction with the reviewed works dealing with broader discussion about digital culture and decolonisation, gave me resources to answer my final research question, “How could technology play a meaningful role in this process of decolonising knowledge production in South African museums?”

3.2. Case Studies

3.2.1. The Recovering Voices Initiative, Smithsonian NMNH, USA

The Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. has taken significant steps towards using digital tools to work democratically with communities, not least through its *Recovering Voices (RV)* initiative. Formed from a partnership between the

Smithsonian's Museum of Natural History (NMNH), the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), and the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage (CFCH), the project addresses the national and global loss of Indigenous language and knowledge (Bell 2012). Among others, *RV* works with Indigenous communities of Alaska, the Hopi and Zuni Pueblos, Algonquian speaking communities, Zapotec speakers from San Lucas Quiaviní, Oaxaca, and the I'ai of the Purari Delta of Papua New Guinea. While acknowledging that there are other museums working with communities, *RV* is notable "for making the community the project's *priority* while working to enhance the collections in a way that's entirely supported by institution funds" (Smithsonian staff member, pers. comm., December 7, 2015). As such, *RV*'s research is guided by core principles that mean projects function as real partnerships with communities rather than token collaborations.

These principles include recognising that there are differences between institutional and informal approaches to creating knowledge so that the Smithsonian "pushes the boundaries" of who conducts research as well as how and where it is conducted (Bell 2012, 2). In this sense, *RV* seems to address Srinivasan's (2006, 360) concern that seriously engaging with the community depends not only on working to solve a pre-identified problem, but on first framing it in the community's terms and working with an understanding that "different cultures manifest distinctly through the means by which they conceive of and *categorize* knowledge." This is an important point. Boast and Srinivasan believe it is specifically the "specialized language" of museum cataloguing and "intellectual control over the informational core" that creates "tension" with "the community-orientated intentions" of Indigenous groups when museums attempt to collaborate with them, a pitfall that *RV* seems to avoid (Srinivasan et al. 2009, 164).

Indeed, a key *RV* focus is reconnecting source communities with collections in ways that mean the museum rethinks the knowledge its collections contain, which is arguably a significant move towards decolonising them (Bell 2012). *RV* actively encourages access to its collections in a number of ways, including exploring "digital networks" as well as in-person community visits. *RV* previously issued two calls per year to fund three projects as a way of facilitating this kind of access. They have since changed this to one call per year so that they can better assess the quality of applications and more easily schedule flights, hotels, and access to collections for the

visiting groups. In the funding year 2016, *RV* continued funding three groups per year but two of these were competitive awards and another was strategic. That strategic award builds on the relationships *RV* already has—be they relationships that a curator brought to *RV*, relationships with groups that started as competitively funded community research groups, or relationships that emerged in another similar situation (Smithsonian staff member, pers. comm., October 14, 2015).

As part of *RV*, more than 34,428 objects within the Smithsonian collections had been digitised and their records enhanced within SIRIS and EMu, the museum's collections management systems, by 2016. The range of material digitised is broad, encompassing digital photographs of 4,446 artefacts in the Hopi ceramic collection, more than 6,000 digitised pages of Iroquoian language materials for the Six Nations of Canada, and 443 digital objects and 300 digital photographs from the Papua New Guinea collection (Bell 2012). The Smithsonian takes seriously the task of correcting and enhancing its catalogue records according to information shared during the *RV* community visits. When *RV* hosted a weeklong community visit to the Smithsonian for five Cheyenne visitors in November 2015, I was fortunate enough to join the group on their final day when they visited the NMAI's Cultural Resource Center (NMAI-CRC) in Suitland, Maryland. Throughout the day, I observed the NMAI collections manager making diligent notes on printed catalogue records without ever challenging the authority of the visiting Cheyenne experts, besides making suggestions about how objects should be handled in line with conservation concerns. *RV* also makes digital recordings of every community visit for which the staff is currently developing a workflow; this means the information collected in these videos will also be used to update the EMu records. The videos themselves will become the evidence for the changes made to the body of knowledge held within the catalogue records (Smithsonian staff member 2015b). As such, *RV* seems to offer a solution of the kind Srinivasan et al. (2009) demand, whereby Indigenous communities and museum workers are finding possible solutions to problems of access and authorship so that Indigenous communities can present "collective and personal identities that work against inaccurate stereotypes" (166).

Digitally recording the community visits does entail both challenges and opportunities of a practical and ethical nature. Every community visiting the Smithsonian as part of *RV* receives a copy of the video the staff produces,

demonstrating the Smithsonian's commitment to return the research, another core principle for *RV* (Bell 2012). The *RV* project team's commitment to this principle is further evidenced by their initiating the *After the Return: Digital Repatriation and the Circulation of Indigenous Knowledge* conference, hosted by NMNH in 2012, which engaged with the impact technological changes and cultural needs have on source communities (Smithsonian Institution, Washington State University, and NSF 2012). In this way, the project seems to address Smith's criticism that too often research fails to deliver any benefits to the source communities who helped create and develop the ideas in the first place (Tuhiwai Smith 1999).

Privacy issues do mean that access to and circulation of the recorded visits beyond the community is strictly controlled by *RV*. The *RV* staff would like to "cut up" the consultation videos into clips about individual objects that might be inserted into corresponding catalogue records in EMu, but while this may be fine for internal use, staff foresee ethical issues with making such information publically available online. In the fiscal year 2016/17, the team actively worked on putting the video into EMu, but it will remain offline. There are also technical hurdles in terms of the broadband capacity needed to stream video through the publicly available collections database (Smithsonian staff member 2015a).

Digital tools are used not only by the Smithsonian in *RV* projects but are also employed by the visiting source community. As Michael Jordan's (2015) report on the Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma's *RV* visit to the Smithsonian in 2014 highlights, both community and museum benefitted from using digital tools during this visit. At the community's request, the museum produced digital copies of images from the James Mooney photograph collection so that the visitors could share these with community members at home, thereby taking advantage of the portability of digital images and possibilities of digital return. As a way of overcoming time constraints, the Smithsonian's National Anthropological Archives (NAA) provided DVDs and an electronic hard drive containing copies of field notes, texts, and reports rather than requiring community members to sift through the wealth of physical material during their visit. Granted more time to examine the materials, Mr Poolaw, one of the Kiowa researchers, found they contained information and vocabulary unpublished elsewhere. This example seems to emphasise the benefit inherent in digital archival copies that can be accessed in ways that impose fewer time or geographic

constraints. The team also digitally photographed objects in detail “to record construction and decorative techniques,” so that they might incorporate them in beadwork classes at home (Jordan 2015, 83 - 84). Presumably the ability to easily zoom in and enhance digital photographs made capturing intricate details a more straightforward task.

During the November 2015 Cheyenne community visit, I likewise witnessed the Cheyenne beadworker, *parfleche* artist, dressmaker, ledger book artist, and language programme coordinator capture images of the collection items using their tablets, digital cameras, and smartphones with the intention of sharing them with their community when they returned to Oklahoma. They supplemented these images by taking numerous handwritten notes. Certain items elicited greater interest, particularly a pictorial pipe bag, since the group had previously seen copies of similar artifacts in the past but had never before enjoyed a “hands on” experience of such an item. Like the Kiowa, the Cheyenne visitors expressed similar ideas about using the images to inspire their own artworks and education programmes, thus seeming to support Srinivasan et al.’s (2009, 164) argument that Indigenous communities are becoming increasingly interested in how ICTs can be used to support local networking, activism, archiving, and preservation goals while catalysing local businesses around media production.

Of course, digital tools are not equally useful or useful in the same ways in all research projects. As one Smithsonian staff member involved with *RV* shared, in the current botany project with a Zapotec community, digital tools have proved more effective when used to disseminate knowledge than to gather it. The team in fact encountered serious issues when attempting to use digital surrogates for real plant specimens. In this format, where scale and context were less clear, even the project’s most knowledgeable Indigenous informants found it difficult to identify specimens. Given the bulk of information generated by the project, however, the *RV* staff member suggested that it would be very difficult to store or share it adequately without the project’s website component. While not every household or individual in the Zapotec community can access the Internet at home or through personal devices, there are cybercafés located within the community; to raise awareness about the website, the *RV* team printed posters and displayed these within the cybercafés and

elsewhere in the community (Smithsonian staff member, pers. comm., October 14, 2015).

3.2.2. Reciprocal Research Network, University of British Columbia's Museum of Anthropology, Canada

In Canada, the University of British Columbia's Museum of Anthropology (MoA-UBC) Reciprocal Research Network (RRN), which was co-developed with the Musqueam Indian Band, the Stó:lō Nation/Tribal Council, and the U'mista Cultural Society, has attracted significant attention for its efforts to function as a truly collaborative rather than consultative digital project. Designed to retrieve images and information about cultural heritage originating in Canada's Northwest Coast, the RRN software portal searches multiple museum databases. More than this, the RRN has, as part of its development process, been engaged in installing Internet kiosks in the more remote areas of British Columbia, where the source communities reside; this action is supplemented with ICT skill-building initiatives in the communities. In theory, this overcomes some of the potential digital divide issues. The RRN has taken a further step to address concerns about digital information flows and knowledge appropriation by allowing all RRN participants to choose the level of open source copyright they want for comments they may contribute (Gibson and Turner 2012). For these many reasons, Boast and Enoté (2013, 104) credit the RRN with being one of the first projects to develop "digital information sharing" with source communities, since it incorporates "data sharing, commenting/discussions, and originating community collaboration." Deidre Brown and George Nicholas (2012) similarly suggest that the RRN be considered one of the few digital museums spaces where Indigenous people enjoy roles as gatekeepers and not just as informants.

Yet, Boast and Enoté (2013, 104) do suggest a weakness in the RRN, namely that the language is still very much that of a museum catalogue, and there is "little evidence, yet, that other voices are entering the descriptions"; when those voices do enter the description, they only find their way into the museum catalogue if permitted by the "curatorial editor" at the museum. Boast (pers. comm., June 10, 2015) suggests that much of this stems from inherent issues with portal software, the system chosen for this project. Portal software, he argues, is designed with the intention of maintaining institutional control over information and, as such,

somewhat undermines the very good collaborative intentions of the MoA-UBC museum workers who initiated the RRN. As my exploration of the Five Hundred Year Archive (FHYA) project in chapter seven demonstrates, disrupting these existing digital databases structures is fraught with difficulties. That said, the fact that source communities were intimately involved with conceiving the RRN and selecting the material made available does suggest a museum taking more serious steps towards disrupting historical power imbalances than simply “permitting” participants to broadcast their comments from the peripheries of online collections.

3.2.3. Zuni A:shiwi A:Wan Museum and Heritage Centre, USA

The Zuni A:shiwi A:Wan Museum and Heritage Centre (AAMHC) in New Mexico, USA, offers an example of a North American digitisation project that more fundamentally decolonises knowledge systems in a museum. As Gwyneira Isaac (2009, 313) notes, Zuni communities were initially sceptical of digital copies of artefacts, understanding as they do that duplicates can act as proof of knowledge and so are problematic since they allow knowledge to “be removed from proper context of responsibility.” Indeed when Robin Boast, working at that time with Cambridge University’s Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (MoAA), approached the AAMHC to explore the possibility of enriching the MoAA’s database of Kechiba:wa items by adding contemporary Zuni views, the director, Jim Enote, initially refused on the grounds that it would be inappropriate to add information to a database stored outside Zuni control because it risked removing knowledge from their system of responsibility. Respectful of these concerns, Boast and Enote subsequently agreed to develop a database according to Zuni principles, which would be housed within the Zuni *pueblo*.

An interesting decision made by the museum, which ran contrary to national guidelines guaranteeing equal access, was to allow the Zuni photo collection to be divided so that photos containing images of esoteric objects, ceremonies, or landmarks could be stored separately at the Zuni Heritage and Historic Preservation Office, where only initiated members of religious societies were given access to them. As such, both Peers and Brown (2003) note, working with source communities in a serious fashion may indeed mean things are removed from display and certain information is not shown in a catalogue if the community deems it too sensitive. In a similar vein, the museum staff limited the use of computers in their space, despite

arguments that they might be used to educate visitors about oral histories. The Zuni community argued that transferring oral histories was more complex than just learning the content, since the instructive frameworks that convey social protocols are rendered by the story and just as important as the story itself (Isaac 2009, 315-316). The digital catalogue itself embraces these ideas. Unlike most data sharing projects that Boast and Enoté (2013, 107) see as “highly circumscribed, reductive, and commensurating,” they believe the Zuni catalogue overcomes certain challenges by refusing to develop a simple, constructed, shared catalogue. Boast (pers. comm., June 10, 2015) reports that Zuni elders often spend long hours contemplating the digital image captured in the catalogue before consulting the written catalogue records contributed by other museums. All power to add and share knowledge is in the hands of the Zuni community and the data is given to the community to do local systemization, rather than being held centrally, suggesting that knowledge, in this case, really is being democratised within a museum space. Consequently, we might also see the catalogue as a bulwark against the number of misrepresentations of Zuni culture that currently circulate too easily online and influence Zuni youth.¹³

3.2.4. Ara Irititja Database, Australia

Rhiannon Mason (2006) praises the Ara Irititja project still being conducted in Australia for rejecting standard classification systems. Ara Irititja is a database of over 50,000 digital images and sound recordings of *Anangu* culture collected from museums, archives and private collections since 1994. Ara Irititja is housed on computer stations at the museum in Adelaide and on eleven mobile *niri niri* computer workstations located throughout the remote *Pitjantjatjara* lands. These *niri niri* are unique work stations that are capable of withstanding a plethora of pests, from mice to children. Kim Christen (2006, 57), who played an active role in researching the project, describes the database as “an icon of Indigenous inspired technological solutions to practical problems.”

Interestingly, Christen suggests that the *Anangu* people were less interested in “physical repatriation” than reclaiming the knowledge embodied within the artefacts and oral histories. This is a point that Lissant Bolton (2015) also makes in her research with Erromangans in Vanuatu: she concludes that the return of knowledge

¹³ For more on the damaging impact on youth of Zuni and other Indigenous groups being misrepresented on the Internet, see Iseke-Barnes and Danard (2007).

rather than the transfer of ownership of objects is most important for this group after a period of cultural loss. In the *Anangu* case, however, it is not clear whether physical repatriation is in fact most desired and whether digital repatriation is instead a pragmatic compromise. Christen (2006, 57) does state that “people were more than happy to “return”—in digital form—“the photos and objects they had collected while living on *Pitjantjatjara* lands,” which implies they were perhaps less happy to return the tangible items. Moreover, the term “collected” suggests that the process of appropriation was fairly straightforward; one wonders if such language broadly reflects that used by the *Anangu*, or if some community members would use “stolen” and “invaded,” rather than less loaded terms. Indeed, the use of more neutral terms in museum catalogues is another mechanism for understating the violent means by which artefacts entered museum collections, as I discuss further in Chapter 5, based on my own research. The fact that non-*Anangu* people who are now in possession of the *Anangu* artefacts still enjoy the right to decide whether or not to return the items certainly hints at the persistence of unequal colonial power relations that have not been overturned by acts such as the 1984 Pitjantjatjara Land Rights Act.

Despite these possible constraints, however, the project can be viewed as commendably collaborative. The methodology was community orientated, so that the Pitjantjatjara Council was involved in decisions about collecting and software design before these activities commenced. Significantly, the database was built “using Pitjantjatjara access parameters – gender, kin relations, and country knowledge – to sort and present data” (Christen 2006, 57). Many of the complexities are to do with the database structure itself, since some men’s objects cannot occupy the same space as women’s objects and this rule applies in digital as well as physical spaces (Hughes and Dallwitz 2007, 152). Again, accepting these parameters required a shift in thinking for many non-*Anangu* people involved in the project. The solution has been to split data between three structurally identical databases: open items, men’s items, and women’s items. The restricted databases are never stored on the same computer. Data is further sorted into six fields that are labelled using Pitjantjatjara language but that reflect standard museum catalogue categories: photos, document, sound, movie, object, and maps. A further set of data fields provide space for including such information as object number, collection, date, and copyright, as well as a free information field that “allows multiple storylines to coexist” (Christen

2006, 58). Access, however, is defined in four privilege categories: open access, operator, sorrow (to view and edit items containing deceased people), and offensive (to view and edit offensive items). The community controls who has access, and they password protect this.

While Martin Hughes and John Dallwitz (2007, 151) recognise that such considerations may appear “overly pedantic,” they also argue that Ara Irititja’s attention to detail is “one of the primary reasons for its success and longevity.” Where Morphy (2015) takes issue with the project is that access controls and levels will need to be constantly updated according to changing circumstances and events; this means community opinions as to what should and should not be secret will change. To assume that these conditions will remain as they are now means adopting a colonial view that *Anangu* culture is itself static and ahistorical.

Hughes and Dallwitz also criticise the huge excitement about mass upscaling that surrounds the Ara Irititja project. Their experience has been that this “will not work” and is “totally inappropriate” (2007, 156). Echoing Morphy, they point out that Indigenous Australians see themselves as distinct nations, not one group waiting to be drawn back together. Any attempt to draw all information into one database, or to apply a set of protocols for managing information for one Indigenous groups to *all* Indigenous groups, would thus mean trouble. They conclude that “IT strategies regarding community archives that pay too much attention to scalability, as it refers to numbers of users, are likely to cause concern for Indigenous people about the true intention of those strategies” (156). In this way, they seemingly echo Buchanan’s (1999, 200) notion, influenced by Richard Sclove’s book *Democracy and Technology*, that redistribution of information and its inherent power must involve “participatory design and a democratic adoption of information and technology,” such that there is no single model of access, dissemination, control and content construction, and diversifying these will vary according to principles that “respect cultural specificity, subjectivity, and values” and offers potential “to unite disparate people and ideas.” Again, this reiterates the idea that building offline trust is as important as building a “good” online project.

3.2.5. Nalik Mobile Museum, University of Queensland, the Queensland Museum, and the Nalik Community, Australia/ The Pacific

Another interesting digitisation project led by an Australian museum in conjunction with a university and source community is the Nalik Mobile Museum. The joint venture between the University of Queensland, the Queensland Museum, and the Nalik Community focuses specifically on producing 3D digital copies of Nalik *malangan* carvings. In precolonial times, these sculptures played important ceremonial roles in the complex set of funerary rites, known as *malangan*. Produced by specialists as replicas of visions seen in dreams, the finished carving is only revealed during the final *malangan* cycle and at “no point” does anyone “touch the carving” (Were 2014, 136). After its display, the carving is removed and left to rot or burn as a symbolic death. In the future, the carving might be reproduced, since value is given to the memory of the carving’s imagery and to the right over its reproduction and not to the carving itself. Küchler (2002) states that many of these carvings in fact ended up in museums because they were sold to Western collectors as another way of “killing” the carving.

One issue with this conclusion is that it presents the collectors as saviours in this process without really examining the power dynamics at play between collector and seller, and whether this exchange was supported by the entire community. As with many colonised groups, imperialism and Christianity had profound impacts on local culture. In Nalik society, missionary activity and influence ensured that *malangan* traditions have been “dissipated” or “lost altogether,” including the skills and knowledge to produce the carvings (Were 2014, 136). This need to reconnect with a stolen cultural heritage motivates certain groups to seek repatriation of their artefacts from museum storerooms to the community. The notion of “Digital Repatriation” occupies a contentious space within this framework since, as Ruth Phillips (2011) explains, it is never intended to replace the physical return of the artefact and so often falls short of community expectations. Similarly, digital technology projects are critiqued for failing to meet community needs since, as Brown and Nicholas (2012) argue, they are too often built on a Western liberal ideology of open access that runs counter to Indigenous knowledge systems. Equally problematic, as Michael Christie and Helen Verran (2013) suggest, is the fact that digital formats dilute the performative quality of Indigenous Australian artefacts since they are removed from

the contextual landscape and Indigenous knowledge must be performed in this landscape to become operative.

Yet, Graeme Were (2014, 134-135) does highlight the potential of digital technology to benefit source communities through projects such as the Great Lakes Research Alliance for the Study of Aboriginal Arts and Cultures (GRASAC), which ameliorates the separation of people from Indigenous knowledge, and the Ara Irititja Pitjantjatjara project, where “varying levels of access and editing rights are assigned to community members” and password protected.

Were’s contention is that the Nalik community, unlike other Indigenous groups, *do not want* the physical return of *malangan* carvings to their community. Understood as possessing “hidden powers,” the *malangan* carvings are considered “dangerous heritage” by the Nalik people: “objects that have been ceremoniously killed are supposed to remain absent” (137). Moreover, inaccurate museum documentation means it is difficult to pinpoint the provenance of the carvings and return them to the correct clan leader; to return it to the wrong leader would cause great problems. This does not mean, however, that the Nalik do not see value in the carvings and do not desire a return of the knowledge associated with them. Photographs from the colonial era, published in books, are some help in accessing the *malangan* resources but, as Were makes clear, the communities themselves rarely receive these reproductions, which raises the issue of research dissemination and intended audiences, discussed at length by Tuhiwai Smith (1999). Where photographs are made available, the communities consider them a poor substitute, since this static form is “not enough” to convey “a full understanding of the topological nature of the carvings” (Were 2014, 137). Conversely, a 3D digital representation is considered “enough” by the Nalik people but, unlike Brown’s Maori artefacts, it is not vested with the same ancestral power of the original *taonga* (treasure). Its innocuous digital form successfully overcomes the problems the Nalik associate with handling the tangible carving.

It is the Nalik’s simultaneous acceptance of the digital surrogate and fear of the original artefact that frames the *Mobile Museum* project. Made possible by increased Internet access through mobile phones, the project delivered ten 3D scans of Nalik artefacts to remote communities. Employing a participatory methodology, the

Mobile Museum project included several design workshops that gave the community a key role in developing the platform. The project team did encounter challenges, specifically around poor mobile signals, but Were suggests the Mobile Museum was well received by the Nalik community. Perhaps most significant are the potential socioeconomic benefits that might emanate from the project. Were draws attention to how the Nalik community cited the Mobile Museum project as an example of their commitment to *kastom* (custom) when negotiating with the New Ireland Provincial Government for finances and resources. They presented the digital objects as evidence of their resourcefulness and modernity and of the community's worthiness of financial aid to support their circulation through smartphones and computers. The provincial government agreed with this proposition, although they have not committed to offering financial assistance to date.

Were (2014) also perceives greater interaction with digital technology as having a potentially profound impact on museology. He suggests that if museums previously clung to ethnographic material as significant in terms of "originality and authenticity", the presence of digital objects might shift them into a "second age" where "ethnographic objects take on a more performative dimension again, re-animated through their circulation as digital objects and expressions" (141). What is important is to understand that not all communities and cultures will accept these digital technologies or digital objects in the same way, if at all.

3.2.6. Māori taonga, New Zealand

Something I have touched on above is the different ways Māori cultures perceive digital versions of *taonga*. Indeed, several *iwi* (groups) understand the digital copy as being just as powerful as the tangible original (Brown and Nicholas 2012). This, combined with strict protocols about access and communal ownership, raises many issues for museums in New Zealand and elsewhere working with Māori collections. Indeed, Māori *taonga*, digital or otherwise, cannot be classified in the same ways other artefacts are: they are not static, inert objects whose lives are suspended when they enter the museum and their multiple roles cannot be captured in fixed catalogue categories. It's a point reiterated by Geismar (2018) while recounting her experience of digitising *Tukutuku Roimata*, a beautiful Māori cloak in the UCL ethnographic collection that is also *taonga*, as part of the *Te Ara Wairua* project. Any efforts to truly decolonise knowledge about Māori collections first need to address this through

collaboration with the *iwi*, as *Te Ara Wairua* does. As Ngata, Ngata-Gibson, and Salmond (2012) argue, many Māori *iwi* are intensely aware that asserting authority over *taonga* means making not only ontological and politically important claims, but also proves cognisance of the potential commercial value of their intellectual knowledge and art forms. Unlike many Indigenous groups, the Te Aitanga-a-Hauiti *iwi* has arguably positioned itself on the “right side” of the digital divide. By ensuring community access to databases thanks to installed public access terminals, they can control dissemination of this knowledge; in many ways, Ngata, Ngata-Gibson, and Salmond suggest, the main issue for this *iwi* is “technology keeping up with local creativity and innovation” (234), which replicates real world protocols in digital environments.

Māori *iwi* arguably enjoy greater authority over their artefacts in New Zealand’s museums than Indigenous groups do elsewhere, thanks in part to the country’s official policy of biculturalism. In recent years, the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa has largely responded to Māori concerns over digitisation and digital dissemination by either deciding not to digitise artefacts in the first place, or not to make any digital images freely available online without first consulting the *iwi* source community, a process Adrian Kingston (pers. comm., May 20, 2015) explains as sometimes lengthy and often complicated. Brown and Nicholas (2012), while recognising a need to protect Indigenous cultural property in our digital age, do take issue with the fact that restrictions are widely placed on Māori images at Te Papa, yet digital versions of artefacts from Pacific Islands Indigenous groups are still quite freely available from this institution. Such a situation, they suggest, means it is “only a matter of time” (311) until restrictions placed on culturally sensitive collections are criticised for being undemocratic. This does raise a very interesting point and forces the question about whether certain elements accepted as fundamental to the concept of democracy in fact undermine Indigenous knowledge systems, and how far museums are willing to compromise on these issues today to redress historical wrongs.

3.3. Discussion

Common to each project outlined above is a focus on working with descendent communities as partners in the knowledge production process. There is scope for arguing that true equality between the museum and community is rarely achieved,

but it is certainly an intention. None of these projects attempt to decolonise their catalogues and collections solely from within the museum or only on the museum's terms. This factor significantly inspired my own research, leading me to conclude that while I could begin deconstructing the SAM's catalogue as an individual project, considering something alternative would necessarily mean collaborating with the descendent communities, and in person. Frequently conceived by anthropologists, these projects also provided me with a number of research methods to work with descendent communities in KZN, as I discuss further in the next chapter.

The *RV* project, in particular, emphasised how important it is to share the results of research with the descendent communities, a point which Tuhiwai Smith (1999) insists is imperative for decolonising relations between museums and Indigenous communities. The fact that the Kiowa and Cheyenne communities later used material gathered during their visit to the Smithsonian to inspire art and education programmes highlights how potentially beneficial the research results can be. This gave me a very practical route for considering how and why I should share the results of my collaborative research in ways more accessible than sending copies of this thesis to the descendent communities.

Working on the community's terms is another common feature of each case study. The Zuni AAMHC project reiterates how important it is that community members have time to work with and consider objects, sometimes within group consultations, especially if they have not encountered the items for generations. Ensuring time for similar encounters in my own fieldwork influenced how I designed my workshop events. Likewise, these case studies emphasised a need to listen respectfully to the communities and to refrain from challenging any answers given, an approach that *RV* seems to pursue very successfully. As the Ara Iritija project highlights, working respectfully with communities can sometimes mean accepting that there is certain information that I cannot access, based on various Indigenous protocols. My role is recognising and acknowledging these limitations, and I approached my fieldwork with the intention of doing just this by adopting a reflexive methodology and approaches that I explain in the following chapter.

4. Chapter 4 – Methodology and Methods in Practice

4.1. Introduction

As my previous two chapters demonstrate, decolonising institutions is a worldwide issue and not one limited to South African museums (Stoler 2016, Mamdani 1996). Cultural heritage and other institutions across the globe have embraced digitisation projects as a route towards becoming more democratic, more accountable, and more representative. Yet, despite their best intentions to the contrary, these projects have sometimes led to further exclusion of those groups already historically marginalised by that institution. This is not to say that museums in South Africa and elsewhere that *have* made efforts to decolonise and democratise should be chastised for their perceived failures to achieve these aims. Instead, rectifying the situation requires closer exploration of the potential possibilities offered and problems posed by the digital age. In terms of the museum, this means exploring the core knowledge-making activities of collecting, classifying and cataloguing heritage items. This means also understanding the political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal influences (PESTEL) surrounding access to digital knowledge.

In this chapter, I revisit my core research questions, which address these very issues. I explain my reasons for adopting a reflexive methodological approach when designing my research. I then provide an overview of the more specific methods I used to gather my data and explain my choices. After giving an outline of my two-phased approach to collecting data, I offer a more detailed description of the various activities involved in the historical archival research and fieldwork, beginning with my explanation for choosing the Iziko Museums of South Africa as my site and, more specifically, the Natal Nguni collection as my case study. I demonstrate how the first historical archival research phase informed and shaped my fieldwork in KZN. I then report my visits to this province to collect data through a combination of focus group workshops, semi-structured interviews, and participant observation. In the final section, I explore the ethical issues I faced while undertaking my research, since these fundamentally shaped my project design.

4.2. Map of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, Showing Sites Visited on Research Trips



4.3. Research Questions

My research addresses three core questions:

1. Did South African museums document ethnographic material culture in a way that constructs a specific narrative about Indigenous cultures? If so, what is this narrative and how is it constructed to the exclusion of others?
2. Is it possible to (re)construct alternative knowledge about Indigenous cultures by differently documenting this material culture? If so, how?
3. How could technology play a meaningful role in this process of decolonising knowledge production in South African museums?

These inquiries spark numerous subquestions. Working with the assumption that collecting, cataloguing, and classifying are core museum activities where significant, permanent changes may take place, (Phillips 2011, Srinivasan et al. 2009, Turner 2015b), I also had to ask the following questions to answer my first question:

- What was the wider historical context in which museums constructed their ethnographic collections?
- Who influenced the collection and documentation systems, and in what ways?
- How did the collection and the way it was documented change over time?
- Which items and information were considered “valuable” and worthy of inclusion?
- Is there evidence of other items and information that might have been included, but weren’t? If so, why weren’t these included?
- How does the documentation system reflect and perpetuate decisions made about what information to include and exclude?
- Have the collection, catalogue, and classifications processes—and the values embedded in them—changed since the museum began digitising?

The expression of value and values, as both Miller (2008) and Tanner (2018) point out, and as I discussed in the previous chapter, differs from one context to the next. As Tanner (2018) argues, while value may be individually understood and attributed, by collectively sharing it, society magnifies it. Value(s) are more than monetary, although value can be a conduit between value as price and values as something inalienable (Miller 2008, 1123). For Tanner (2012), there are various modes of value

seen in digital collections, such as utility, education, community, existence, and legacy value. Working with these broader ideas makes it easier to see which values change over time and how.

Building on the answers to this first set of queries, my second research question asked that I consider,

- If and where Indigenous communities are evident in the museum's archive and documentation system?
- Who self-identifies as the descendent or source community today?
- Is this community aware of the collection, and does it have an existing relationship with the museum?
- Does this group prioritise different categories of information about the items?
- Are these commensurable with the museum's categories and classifications?
- Is there also information that shouldn't be included in the documentation and, if so, what and for what reasons?
- Are there other items that the community believes should be included in a museum collection that purportedly represents their culture?

Identifying the source community is not a straightforward task (Bergold and Thomas 2012). As Spivak et al. (1996a) make clear, the source community is rarely a homogenous entity and treating it as such runs the risk of falling back into a colonial-style trap of essentialism. There may be generational and gender divides amongst those the museum identifies as the source community, and those people identified may not feel any affinity with the group or sense of ownership over the collections in question. Joan Anderson et al. (2011, 25) also point out that too often researchers have "pathologized" underrepresented women in the "Third World" and aboriginal communities by overlooking their heterogeneity.

Equipped with a better understanding of if and how the descendent community might structure the collections and documentation on their own terms, I needed to consider in my third research question how technology could facilitate putting this into practice. This meant asking,

- How does the descendent community actually use technology?
- What platforms and devices do they use?

- If there are various responses to these questions, are they split along generational, and/or other, lines?
- What does the community perceive as barriers to using technology meaningfully?
- What opportunities and threats does digitising their material culture foreseeably bring for them?

4.4. Reflexive Methodologies

In attempting to answer these questions, I assumed a broadly reflexive methodology. Over three decades ago, Johannes Fabian (1983, 90) advocated that anthropologists adopt “a reflexive over a reflective stance” as one way of overcoming the discipline’s central allochronism: denial of coevalness. A reflexive approach, unlike a merely reflective one, reveals the ethnographer and so locates both observer and observed within a shared time. Fabian argues that along with constructing the ethnographic present and practicing a rhetoric of vision, anthropologists historically eliminated their autobiographical voice as another way of obscuring their selves; these are all devices that subsequently deny coevalness with the “Other” (84 - 87). Like Kathleen Gough (1968), Gérard Leclerc (1972), and Talal Asad et al.’s (1973) work, this “canonical” text on anthropology’s relationship with the colonial project was “path-breaking” in forcing a radical critique of the discipline, and still influences it today (Bunzl 2014, vii). As a way of mitigating this colonial construct of time, which denies coevalness to the observed “other,” I consciously and frequently use the first person singular in this thesis, including later in this methodology chapter, which is reflected in my shift towards a more informal tone. For these same reasons, I include lengthier observations on people and places made during my research trips that read as autobiographical vignettes. This is just another way of locating myself in the same time and space paradigm as my interlocutors, something that has been best standard practice for ethnographers since the reflexive turn.

Reflecting more broadly on academia’s relationship with colonialism, Tuhiwai Smith (1999, 1) declares “research” “probably one of the dirtiest words in the Indigenous world’s vocabulary” since it is “inextricably” bound with European

imperialism.¹⁴ Her principle gripe is that too often research is conducted according to methodologies that claim ownership over marginalised knowledge while simultaneously rejecting the very people who created and developed these ideas in the first place. Worse, they fail to deliver any of the research results or benefits to these groups. This is a point reiterated by Smith and her co-editors, Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln, in their *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies* (2008), as well as by Todd (2014b) in her critique of the so-called ontological turn. Denzin and Lincoln dispel any notion that qualitative research can ever be neutral and argue instead for methodologies designed with the explicit purpose of conducting “ethical, performative, healing, transformative, decolonizing and participatory” inquiries that are first and foremost accountable to the group being researched (2008, 2).

While somewhat sceptical as to how successfully non-Indigenous researchers can conduct research with Indigenous people, Denzin and Smith suggest that remembering one’s outsider and privileged status is a crucial step towards this (6). Moreover, they advise scholars to ask themselves an important set of questions when designing their research projects: what research do we want done; whom is it for; what difference will it make; who will carry it out; how do we want research done; how will we know it is worthwhile; who will own the research; and who will benefit? In this respect, I fall short of their requirements since, as is the very nature of a PhD project, I designed my fieldwork before starting work with my interlocutors and so approached them with fairly fixed research aims. Haraway’s “greased pole” analogy, is perhaps a more realistic approach (1988, 580). Gillian Laura Creese and Wendy Mae Frisby summarise this as a situation that requires simultaneously critiquing notions of objectivity and knowledge claims that silence the researched communities while maintaining a focus on social change that produces convincing “real world” accounts so that policymakers use the research results in meaningful ways (2011, 3).

Conducting reflexive research likewise means acknowledging my own privileged position as a white, Western-educated researcher and both the advantages and

¹⁴ Ping-Chun Hsuing (2012) also argues that research is too often conducted for an Anglo-American audience and that researchers studying the periphery must make their work more accessible to those they are studying.

limitations this brings to my project. Certainly, my position as such informs my experiences and shapes my worldview, requiring me, as Ross (2003) suggests, to listen more carefully to silences and stories in less familiar contexts, where my background means I am not immediately equipped with the tools necessary to interpret them. Yet, drawing also on Harding's (2004) standpoint theory, I am accepting the proposition that "people can learn to use other perspectives than the ones immediately available from their position" (Jørgensen 2010, 327). Breton, who has conducted significant research projects with Indigenous communities in Canada, identifies herself as "one of the colonizers" but argues that making visible constructs that "support oppression in a thousand subtle and blatant ways" is, in fact, the way decolonisation begins (McCaslin and Breton 2008, 519). Adopting this reflexive methodological approach hopefully allowed me, also one of the colonisers, to likewise make similar, incremental revelations.

As Katherine Boo (2012, 249) states so beautifully about her own researcher positionality while writing *Behind The Beautiful Forevers*, a highly detailed and sensitive account of Mumbai's Annawadi slumdweller, "there being no way around the not-being-Indian business, I tried to compensate for my limitations...by time spent, attention paid, documentation secured, accounts cross-checked," I too had no way around the not-being-South-African-Zulu business but tried to compensate for my own limitations in the very same ways.

4.5. Research Timeline: September 2016–July 2017

My research design was loosely divided into two phases: Historical archival research; and Fieldwork. As discussed below, I combined a number of methods and approaches during each phase.

Phase 1:

- Archival and document research
- Case study approach

Phase 2:

- Case study approach
- Participatory action research
- Participant observation
- Focus groups/workshops

- Semi-structured interviews

I collected the bulk of my primary data during an extended research visit to South Africa between September 2016 and July 2017. I conducted the first phase in Cape Town and the second phase during several trips to the KZN province. The table below shows the main activities and timeframe for these events. When I returned to Cape Town in between fieldwork trips, I continued with further archival research, transcribed the fieldwork interviews, analysed the results, prepared for future fieldwork trips, and produced the workshop publications.

	Main Activity	Time Period
1.	Historical Archival Research	September–November 2016
2.	First KZN Trip: Pilot Workshop (Luthuli Museum, Groutville, KZN)	6–13 December 2016
3.	Second KZN Trip: Exploratory and Second Workshop (Vukani Museum, Eshowe)	19 January–5 February 2017
4.	Third KZN Trip: Third Workshop (Talana Museum, Dundee) & Fourth Workshop (KwaZulu Cultural Museum, Ulundi)	29 March–5 April 2017
5.	Fourth KZN Trip: Workshop Evaluations	3–9 June 2017
6.	Fifth KZN Trip: FHYA Workshops (Vukani Museum & Luthuli Museum)	28–30 June 2017

4.6. Selected Methods and Approaches

My PhD topic straddles and draws upon several traditional academic disciplines. It also ventures into more than one interdisciplinary field, most notably museum studies, information studies, and digital humanities. Accordingly, numerous methods, both qualitative and quantitative were available to me. The ones I selected are those that were most closely associated with history and anthropology but best suited my purposes for the reasons explained below.

4.6.1. Archival and Document Research:

My archive comprised decades of annual reports, reams of accession registers, piles of correspondence, drawers of catalogue cards, and various other museum documents. I pursued this historical method, first within the Smithsonian and then at Iziko, because it gave me scope to better understand the history of these institutions' collections and documentation systems. Researching the collection and catalogue records allowed me to gather important data about what items are included in the collection (and what items are not), when and how they were collected, which catalogue fields the museum uses, and other information that allowed me to address my first research question. Furthermore, this information informed my decisions about which collection would be my case study and, subsequently, how I designed my fieldwork.

4.6.2. Case Studies

Anthropologists, as Simet Sykes (2001) notes, have a long history of using the Case Study Method (See, for example: Evans-Pritchard 1937, Malinowski 1922, Gluckman 1940, Strathern 1988, Sykes, Simet, and Kamene 2001). Max Gluckman's emphasis on lengthier case studies made this approach a notable feature of the Manchester School of Thought, which he founded in 1947. Sykes draws a succinct distinction between Gluckman's and his successors' use of case studies, as compared with that of legal scholars and psychoanalysts: while the latter use cases to illustrate a point, anthropologists first spend time describing a case, or "social situation," and then induce a more general rule or custom based upon it. In a post-colonial context, Sykes argues, it permits us to see social situations as part of an enjoined social system, rather than as culturally different silos. James Jaccard and Jacob Jacoby (2010) likewise suggest that a case study's potential lies in allowing researchers to think about questions in ways that offer new insights. Ranjit Kumar (2014) similarly sees this method as beneficial, since a single case study can be typical of something wider and so make it possible to discern other situations. Given my broader research interests in decolonising museums, it is this more exploratory, anthropological notion of the case study method that I employ in my research. On a more practical level and more specific to my museum-based research, Turner (2015b) states that an individual researcher can reasonably handle a case study, or single collection of objects, which, if chosen carefully, still permits detailed analysis into the ways knowledge is constructed within a cultural heritage institution.

4.6.3. Participatory Action Research:

Many researchers working with marginalised communities adopt a participatory action research (PAR) methodology. Marit Borg et al. (2012) define this approach as a:

“participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile purposes, grounded in a participatory worldview...It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities.” (Borg et al. 2012, 4)

This methodological approach, which has links to other qualitative methodologies, attempts to address many of the concerns raised by Tuhiwai Smith, Denzin, and others regarding power imbalances when researching marginalised communities. As Jarg Bergold and Stefan Thomas (2012, 192) highlight, this methodology focuses on the significance and usefulness of extensively involving the community as research partners in the “knowledge-production process.” “Collaboration” is emphasised as much as “action and change,” which distinguishes it from a broader Action Research methodology, so that both sides benefit from the research process (192 - 194).

William Neuman (2014) argues that it is the emphasis placed on democratising knowledge production that likewise distinguishes PAR from straightforward action research, since being involved in the research process both empowers and informs participants by revealing injustices in such a way that action may be taken to ameliorate them.

Leonora Angeles (2011) identifies the following as common elements present in PAR:

- Community members are treated as co-investigators
- The research project is used as an opportunity to raise awareness of issues and to educate both the participants and facilitators
- Indigenous and local knowledge held by marginalised groups is treated seriously and respectfully

Certainly, a PAR approach is very attractive in terms of my methodological concerns. However, with a PhD being assessed as an *individual* piece of work, this criterion possibly conflicts with that of PAR, whereby I would assume the role of a

co-investigator and not of a lead researcher. This co-collaborator factor is a limitation that Borg et al. (2012) recognise, suggesting that the research facilitator, even in PAR, is often the one driving the project by raising certain issues and stimulating discussions, making it less egalitarian than the researcher often intends. Moreover, PAR rejects the notion of having a hypothesis before conducting research, preferring to allow theories to emerge during the research process. Subsequently, while deciding to use many of the specific methods advocated by PAR researchers, several of which are outlined below, I have decided to adapt some of these and include other methods alongside those most commonly used in PAR.

4.6.4. Participant Observation:

Kathleen and Billie DeWalt (2011, 2) describe participant observation, commonly called “field research” as a “way to collect data in naturalistic settings by ethnographers who observe and/or take part in the common and uncommon activities of the people being studied.” Participant observation requires close attention to be paid to seemingly innocuous details that are carefully recorded in fieldwork notes produced as close as possible in time to the event. While always aware that the participant observer maintains a privileged position among the community she studies, whether through gender, class, or racial differences, the DeWalts argue that an introspective, self-reflexive participant observer can indeed gather very useful information about power structures and hierarchies within the community, as well as details about daily activities. Such “enculturation,” they argue, permits a tacit understanding of the community (4).

The basic premise of participant observation is that field researchers begin with a loose question, select a site or group to study, gain access to them, adopt a social role within that setting and then start observing and recording (Neuman 2014). Far from being straightforward, however, each step requires the development of certain skills and relationships to execute this well. DeWalt and DeWalt (2011), for instance, highlight the significance of assessing language capabilities and health and safety concerns when selecting a field site as these can compromise the participant observer’s effectiveness, regardless of the site’s other benefits. O’Leary (2005) highlights how identifying and working with key informants in the community might provide the desired access and facilitate the researcher’s role within the community.

Yet even this is not simple, since participant observers must consider power imbalances between the researcher and informant while also assessing the informant's position within the community and their own agenda.

Observing and recording are likewise challenging activities. DeWalt and DeWalt (2011) emphasise the ethical responsibility of the participant observer to ensure those being observed *know* they are being observed, which is achievable by openly taking notes in public and routinely reminding people that they are being researched. They stress the importance of being quiet while observing and not being afraid to ask naïve questions to clarify anything not immediately understood. The recording process is often as time consuming as the actual observation part: jotted notes taken during the day should, the DeWalts suggest, be written in a fuller format each evening and be complemented with sketches, maps, a calendar, and personal diary to enhance reflexivity.

While my research is not purely ethnographic, a period of participant observation was crucial for my study. Not only did I use this method to select my fieldwork sites of study and as a possible way of gaining access, it also provided contextual information about the community, both in the museum and outside it—particularly in terms of understanding who possessed certain authority and trust within the community and where conflicts and divisions may emerge. This was necessary to form hypotheses that could be tested using other qualitative and quantitative methods. Moreover, the self-reflexivity element that participant observation requires subsequently facilitates the necessary mind shift that Bob Matthews and Liz Ross (2010) prescribe.

One other aspect of fieldwork that the DeWalts highlight is researchers bringing their children with them into the field, and the role the children might play (2011, 74-77). I planned my fieldwork during my last trimester of pregnancy and so was very interested in this issue. I moved my son, Albert, to South Africa with me when he was six months old. Since I breastfed him exclusively for a year and became his primary care-giver following my separation from his father, this meant taking him with me on my research trips to KZN. As the DeWalts suggest, Albert's presence had both positive and negative impacts on my participant observation. I do believe

he engendered a greater level of rapport between me and the communities I visited, especially amongst the female participants, who comfortably shared with me their own stories about sleepless nights and feeding schedules, establishing a common trust that spilled over into our other workshop discussions. At the same time, I did compromise on the amount of time I spent in the field and could not join the evening activities to which interlocutors invited me because I had childcare obligations. On balance, however, Albert was definitely an asset in both this and many other ways.

4.6.5. Focus Groups/Workshops:

As Clive Seale (2004, 194 - 198) points out, focus groups are not, strictly speaking, ethnographic interviews, since they set up an artificial environment for observation; however, they can generate significant qualitative data since they capture group dynamics in ways individual interviews do not by making visible “how people articulate and justify their ideas in relation to others.” Matthews and Ross (2010) suggest that in addition to observing group dynamics, focus groups provide opportunities to include more people in the research process in an empowering way, something Tuhiwai Smith (1999) believes is imperative when working with marginalised communities. Focus groups are also a chance to explore ideas for research design at the beginning of the project and then check back with participants once the project is near completion (Matthews and Ross 2010). Kumar (2014) suggests that focus groups are a particularly attractive method for researchers since they are low-cost and fairly simple to design.

In some cases, however, this means they are regarded as “quick and dirty” ways to capture data about community opinions (Bamberger, Rao, and Woolcock 2010, 10). Indeed, focus groups do have limitations. The “wrong” setting can impede discussions; for example, Creese and Frisby (2011) found through work with Indigenous Australians that Aboriginal groups preferred discussing their knowledge in a natural environment rather than in a fancy hotel. Problems also arise if the discussion is poorly facilitated by the researcher, especially when sensitive issues are raised. Likewise, too many people in the group can make any meaningful discussion impossible; as such, Matthews and Ross (2010) advise limiting the group size to a maximum of 13 participants. Deciding who to include in the group if it is to be representative of a wider community poses another set of challenges, some of which

may be mitigated by prior participant observation that gives insights into possible dynamics within the selected group. At a practical level, Seale (2004) suggests overcoming some potential challenges by ensuring that the focus group is conducted at a convenient time and place for the participants (not the researcher), by offering to pay travel and childcare costs for the participants whenever possible, and by making sure that the process is no longer than two hours long and includes structured breaks with refreshments provided by the researcher. These are all factors that I considered when developing a budget for the research project. Borg et al. (2012) also suggest beginning meetings with “informal talk” and making time to chatter about everyday activities, such as football results and movies recently watched, since this makes participants more relaxed and comfortable while giving the impression that no topics are off limits or frivolous. This also gives the participants more confidence to speak with authority on other issues.

The potential to include and empower community members in the research process through the focus groups made it an attractive method to include in my study. More than this, they were a chance to better understand the complexity of the community, thus avoiding homogenising or pathologising a marginalised group in the way Spivak (1996a) suggests researchers too often do. Importantly, they offered a forum for bringing stakeholders with possibly competing interests into the same space and were a safe space for sharing ideas that prompted participants to think about things in different ways with the intention of reaching a group consensus on a decision. As I commenced my research, I quickly began to think of these focus groups as workshops with the idea that this term suggested greater collaboration, i.e., the notion that all participants, including me, would be workshopping ideas together.

4.6.6. Semi-Structured Interviews:

One-on-one interviews are an excellent way to further explore particular topics, especially if topics are of a sensitive nature so that the respondent may be uncomfortable discussing them in the presence of others (Matthews and Ross 2010). Social science research interviews tend to be conducted as structured, unstructured, or semi-structured interviews. In structured interviews, the interviewer does not deviate from the script prepared beforehand. While very useful for gathering raw data, the exploratory nature of my research meant new questions did arise during the

interview based on the interviewee's other responses. I thus preferred a less structured format so that I had an opportunity to ask these questions.

Wholly unstructured interviews, sometimes called life-story or narrative interviews, conversely allow the respondents to talk without any guidance at all (Kumar 2014). While Matthews and Ross (2010) recognise that this genre of interviews provides opportunities to gather large amounts of data, the drawback is that the conversation can be unfocused, with respondents speaking instead only about issues that interest them. A more concerning aspect of this type of interview, which especially arises when interviewing marginalised people who have previously experienced dispossession, is that the narrator can give away too many details about their life and be left feeling uncomfortable that the researcher has "taken" their story so that it no longer belongs to them.

Semi-structured interviews that retain a more specific focus—in this case on the respondent's relationship with a particular collection—while permitting some flexibility in the script are thus a preferable balance for my research project. Matthews and Ross suggest some useful probes for further exploring unforeseen topics that arise in the semi-structured interview. Neuman (2014) notes that an interviewer's failure to probe properly during a semi-structured interview is one of the risks associated with this format. Other risks that may jeopardise the interview's success include the respondent giving false answers, whether intentionally or because the interviewer's presence makes them forgetful, anxious, or embarrassed; the interviewer unduly influencing the interviewee to give a particular answer, possibly due to their more powerful position, which might be communicated through appearance, tone, attitude, and reaction to the interviewee's answers; and the interviewer selecting inappropriate participants for the interview in the first place.

4.7. Methods in Practice

The following section reports how I put this bricolage of methods discussed above—archival research, case study, elements of PAR, participant observation, focus groups, and semi-structured interviews—into practice in South Africa with varying levels of success, a point that I reflect on in the limitation section of my conclusion, Chapter 8.

4.7.1. Developing the Research Design at The Smithsonian NMNH

Between October and December 2015, I spent three months at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History as an AHRC Pre-doctoral Research Fellow. During this time, I had an opportunity to research both the *Recovering Voices* Initiative (RV) under the guidance of Dr Joshua A. Bell and the African collection with the assistance of Dr Mary Jo Arnoldi. These experiences, as well as the many formal and informal conversations I had with other Smithsonian staff members, significantly shaped my subsequent research design. The RV program, as discussed in the preceding chapter, builds on decades of collaboration at the Smithsonian. The wealth of knowledge conveyed by the RV and associated staff, combined with a chance to participate in a Cheyenne community visit to the museum, proved invaluable for thinking about how I might facilitate engagements between originating communities and collections during my own fieldwork, both theoretically and logistically. My research in the African collection, which entailed several visits to the Museum Support Centre (MSC) in Suitland, Maryland, and time in the National Anthropological Archives (NAA), was a chance to think more broadly about how museums have historically produced knowledge about African cultures through their cataloguing and classifying systems. Working closely with a handful of items supposedly collected in South Africa, I quickly realised how valuable museum documentation systems and archives are for understanding how museums produced this knowledge in the first place, and the possibilities they also offer for initiating other narratives. This significantly influenced my decision to foreground historical archival research as part of my fieldwork design while the RV research emphasised how fundamental it is that source communities are partners in decolonising the documentation.

4.7.2. Phase 1: Historical Archival Research

Selecting the Site- An Overview of the Iziko South African Museum

The Iziko SAM is the oldest and largest museum on the African subcontinent. First established in 1825 by Lord Charles Somerset, its history spans the periods of European colonialism, apartheid, and independence. Summers (1975) suggests that curiosities collected by Joachim Nickolaus von Dessin, a soldier who moved from Brandenburg to the Cape in the eighteenth century, are the seed of the SAM's ethnology collection. I chose to conduct my fieldwork within this museum precisely because of its long history of collecting, cataloguing, and classifying items as

ethnographic. From a pragmatic point of view, the institution's commitment to record keeping means there is a significant and available archive for research. Moreover, given the SAM's quintessential colonial foundations, transforming and decolonising this collection is both challenging and imperative in the politically postcolonial period. While I recognise that focusing on just one institution limits my ability to address issues of decolonisation more widely in South Africa's museums, the SAM's considerable historical influence in this sphere, as discussed in Chapter 5, means these research findings will likely have relevance elsewhere in the country.

Little is known about this museum's earliest history. Seemingly, the institution fell into oblivion soon after 1825 and was only properly resurrected by Parliamentary Act No. 17 of 1857, which incorporated it as the South African Museum. For the next 170 years, white men of European descent assumed the key director and curator roles within the SAM. Four years after independence, and a year after President Mandela publicly critiqued museums for failing to transform (Witz 2006), Parliament issued the Cultural Institutions Act, 1998, which integrated the SAM and four other museums in the Western Cape into the Southern Flagship Institution. These museums, along with six others, became the Iziko Museums of Cape Town in 2001 and were renamed Iziko Museums of South Africa in 2012. Iziko translates as "hearth" in isiXhosa and is the symbolic centre of a home that embodies "warmth, kinship and the spirits of ancestors" (Iziko Museums of South Africa 2017a).

The items variously classified as ethnographic by the SAM over the years have undergone a similarly dramatic change in status. Grouped now as the "Indigenous Knowledge/Ethnographic collections," these items form part of Iziko's broader social history collections; Iziko's other items are classified as either natural history collections or art collections. The social history collections aim, specifically, "to increase public awareness of the history and cultural heritage of South Africa, past and present" (Iziko Museums of South Africa 2017a). Following this institutional reorganisation, the social history staff began packing items in 2005 for a move to the newly planned Social History Centre on Church Square, a relocation intended to symbolise a physical break with the colonial past (Davison 2005). This centre finally opened in 2010, and both objects and catalogue cards are now housed here. Within the last couple of years, Iziko has reorganised its core function units into three departments: Collections and Digitisation; Research; and Exhibitions. As these new

departmental titles suggest, Iziko places increasing priority on digitising its collections, making it a timely site for my study.

While the SAM started discussions about a computerised collections database in the 1970s, as reviewed in Chapter 5, little happened in terms of the ethnographic collection until decades later. The museum did begin capturing natural history items in an electronic database soon after 1990, but this is quite separate from the databases for the social history and art collections. Iziko is slowly transferring these latter catalogue records into the Logos Flow digital database, an electronic system that is, according to Lailah Hisham, Iziko's social history collections manager, better suited to capturing artworks, an unsurprisingly situation since the database designer worked previously at the Iziko South African National Gallery (Hisham, pers. comm., September 29, 2016). Hisham and her team have recorded approximately 40,000 items in this database, but Iziko currently estimates that it must capture 2.26 million artefact records in digital form, something it recognises as "an enormous challenge," since the institution's long history means almost all of these were accessioned in a paper-based card system (Iziko Museums of South Africa 2017a). Digitising these records is now immediately urgent as the South African Accounting Standards Board (ASB) recently implemented the Generally Recognised Accounting Practice (GRAP) 103 on Heritage Assets, which obliges all heritage institutions in the country to record these assets for financial reporting purposes.

Case Study: The Natal Nguni Collection

I began my data collection at Iziko in September 2016, shortly after returning to my PhD from maternity leave. After completing their research request forms, Iziko supported my application for a South African research visa that allowed my son and me to spend up to seven months in the country. We later extended this period by another three months. I spent my early weeks at Iziko in the Social History Centre's Research Library, a place I described in my first research diary entry as "a beautiful space on the ground floor of the building with open shelves and individual work spaces, where the atmosphere is hushed and serious." This research diary became an essential part of my fieldwork during both the initial historical archival research period and when collecting data in KZN. As DeWalt and DeWalt (2011) stress, taking time each evening to write up notes and observations accrued during the day facilitates greater reflexivity. I maintained a digital diary throughout my stay in

South Africa and published daily entries on a private WordPress site; I shared this with my supervisors in the UK so that they could also follow my progress from a distance.

The Social History Centre Research Library houses a copy of nearly every annual report for the SAM dating back to its inception in 1855. For more than a fortnight, I trawled through these reports with the intention of understanding the SAM's broad collecting and classifying philosophy, and how this evolved over the years. One of my main aims during this initial phase at Iziko was identifying a case study collection of specific items that I could study in greater detail and for which there exists an accessible descendant community. While the annual reports gave me a very broad overview of the SAM's collections and were the perfect entry point into the museum's archives, I drew on a far wider ensemble of historical documents to finalise my decision:

- Annual reports, 1855–2016
- Accession registers
- Catalogue cards
- Correspondence
- Other documents, such as E J Dunn's self-created catalogue, donated along with his collection

In late September, I migrated to the mezzanine level at the Social History Centre. Inside this space, it feels clinical and eerily calm, which is strange when you consider all the information this room holds on everyday objects, things that largely became exceptional only once they had entered this museum space. This is where the collections manager, Hisham, has her office and where many of the institutional archives are stored, including the catalogue cards for the former SAM's ethnographic collection. Iziko allowed me to use the desk space here for the duration of my stay. Until November, we also shared this workspace with GRAP-103 auditors, since they compiled their inventory largely based on the catalogue cards in this room. During this period, Iziko gave me open access to the catalogue cards themselves, and Hisham mediated my access to the other documents listed above, since these are held in locked filing cabinets. Being present here also gave me an opportunity to identify

key Iziko staff members, with whom I conducted semi-structured interviews over the coming months.

I considered at least three subcollections from the former anthropology and ethnology collection as my case study: items classified as Ndebele, the Natal Nguni collection, and a collection of Lobedu material culture, which was donated to the SAM by anthropologist Eileen Krige in the 1970s. The Natal Nguni collection, which I finally selected for my detailed study, comprises items collected primarily from present-day KZN. While they are now considered part of Iziko's Social History collections, the catalogue cards still occupy the same physical drawers they did when they were part of the SAM's ethnographic collection, albeit in a different building.

My reasons for choosing the Natal Nguni collection were several. Firstly, the term "Zulu" appeared numerous times in the annual reports, and these items are all included under the umbrella Natal Nguni classification, suggesting a collection that reflects the SAM's changing interests over the years. Secondly, an initial review of the catalogue cards revealed nearly one thousand items in the Natal Nguni collection, making it an adequate size for data collection. Thirdly, as I began searching through the accessions registers and correspondence files, I realised there was sufficient documentation to link the objects with records that revealed more about the SAM's collecting, cataloguing and classifying practices than the catalogue cards do on their own.

These observations also apply to both the Ndebele and Krige-Lobedu collections to some extent. In the end, personal considerations also swayed my final choice. Before my PhD, I lived for nearly four years in KZN and spent most of these working at the Luthuli Museum South African National Legacy Project. This gave me an active network of contacts across the province who might reasonably act as gatekeepers to other interlocutors and assist with organising space to host focus group workshops at local museums. Given the time constraints of the fieldwork, I judged it more likely that I would achieve my research goals if I built on this network, rather than dedicating significant, necessary time to creating a similar network from scratch. Moreover, I already had a basic knowledge of the isiZulu language, albeit very basic, partly from living there and partly from taking additional introductory lessons

supported by the LAHP language fund. Building further on this rather than attempting to learn an entirely new language to converse with interlocutors also made sense in terms of the time constraints. As DeWalt and DeWalt (2011) point out, assessing language abilities is a significant factor when selecting a fieldwork site. Subsequently, I embarked on two eight-week isiZulu courses at a language school in Cape Town, also generously sponsored by the LAHP language fund.

Once I had decided to focus on the Natal Nguni collection, I began a more rigorous examination of the SAM's accessions registers, correspondence files and other documents, this time looking specifically for any mention of "Zulu" or "Natal Nguni." Historically, these terms were subsumed under the broader "Bantu" or "Kaffir" category—as frequently occurred at the Smithsonian as well—and so I expanded my research to encompass these. Having mapped an overview of the SAM's evolving collecting interests from the annual reports, this detailed analysis allowed me to locate the Natal Nguni collection's history within the broader institutional history. While extracting and tabulating excerpts from the many letters so that I could later code these, I also developed a spreadsheet to link object numbers, meticulously recorded on the catalogue cards, with associated correspondence. A sample of this is included as Appendix 1. Iziko currently has no system for generating these links. Only then did I enter the Social History Centre's upper-level storerooms to access and photograph the items themselves. What this process revealed was a wealth of information about certain items that is not recorded on the catalogue cards and so, subsequently, is not captured in the Logos Flow digital database. As well as proving an important exercise for understanding how the museum constructed information about objects and cultures, this research also revealed echoes of other voices in the archive currently obscured by the closed card-system categories. I discuss the bulk of these research findings in the following chapter.

4.7.3. Phase 2: The Fieldwork

Designing the Workshop

The process of answering my second and third research questions—*"Is it possible to (re)construct alternative knowledge about Indigenous cultures by differently documenting this material culture? If so, how?"* and *"How could technology play a*

meaningful role in this process of decolonising knowledge production in South African museums?”—always implied stepping out of the archive. I designed my original project accordingly but could only refine the second phase while undertaking this initial historical archival research. Identifying the Natal Nguni collection as my case study collection during this period meant instinctively choosing to work with people in KZN since they most likely constitute the descendent communities. KZN is a huge province, covering 94,361 km², and is home to 10.27 million people, making it the second most populous of South Africa’s nine provinces; hence it was necessary to further limit my scope. Again, my archival research findings directed my focus. Armed with more provenance information, I was able to group items according to where they were collected and so develop a better sense as to where descendent communities might be geographically based. When I plotted these on a map of KZN, clear patterns emerged, with most material being clustered around former mission stations or places visited by SAM researchers on their collecting expeditions. I am, of course, aware that the great social upheavals of apartheid mean Indigenous people were frequently displaced and relocated over the years, either forcibly through legislation or by limited employment opportunities, and so there is no guarantee that the direct descendants of those people using or making the items would still live in the same area.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the notion of descendent and source communities is itself fraught since these groups are rarely homogeneous and decisions about who to include always mean making compromises. For the purposes of my research, I worked with a broader understanding of descendant communities that might include people who consider themselves culturally and symbolically linked with the items (Peers and Brown 2003) and a notion that memory is deeply connected to place (Dunn 2016). I also used the mapped results to make preliminary decisions about where to visit in KZN with the hope items might resonate more closely with people in those areas where they were reportedly collected.

As explained in my “Selected Methods and Approaches,” I selected workshops as part of my fieldwork methodology since they potentially incorporate more people in the research process in an empowering way (Matthews and Ross 2010), something Susan Sleeper-Smith (2009) sees as essential when working with historically marginalised communities. In October 2016, I started planning my first pilot

workshop. The purpose of the pilot was to test out the programme, both in terms of its content and duration, before agreeing dates for all future workshops in case I needed to make significant changes based on my first workshop experience. To ensure I had time to make the changes and conduct additional workshops, I aimed to complete the pilot workshop before Christmas 2016. Given that some SAM items on my list were collected in the Mapumulo vicinity, which is close to the Luthuli Museum in Groutville, I opted to hold my first workshop there. I applied to the King's College Research Ethics Committee for low risk ethical clearance to conduct the workshops and received permission to continue in November 2016. In the penultimate section of this chapter, I discuss my ethical considerations in greater detail. I also applied for a King's College London Arts and Humanities Small Grant for Research Students in November 2016 and was awarded £670 to fund this workshop. This amount covered my travel to and from KZN, as well as the cost of refreshments, transport, and stationery for the participants, something Seale (2004) strongly advises. The Luthuli Museum generously provided space to host the workshop free of charge.

After discussing the event with staff at both the Luthuli Museum and Iziko, I decided to run the pilot workshop over one day and on a Friday, not the weekend as I first anticipated. This was, in part, because we agreed that the weekday arrangement would naturally attract my target participants: the unemployed, women, and pensioners, whose marginalised statuses mean their voices are frequently excluded from official records. At the weekends, these groups have family and church obligations that mean they are even less likely to find time to participate. Likewise, hosting the event at the weekend would mean that Luthuli Museum staff would have to sacrifice their leisure time to supervise the building so that the workshop could go ahead.

During this planning stage, I also considered using translators and interpreters for the workshops. I made some inquiries to find a simultaneous interpreter for the workshops but had only two responses, and both were far beyond my price range. As a compromise, I worked with the local museum to identify a participant or staff member who might assume this role more informally during the workshop. I also opted to video record the sessions and employed a translator to assist me with

translating the isiZulu parts after the event. I discuss the implications of these decisions and the drawbacks in chapter 8.

Participants

Ideally, the workshop participants would constitute a mixed group in terms of age and gender, as well as all self-identifying as Zulu. I did not specify criteria for “being Zulu,” since I preferred participants to interpret this on their own terms. I also wanted to include people who are frequently overlooked and have fewer occasions to make their voices heard, for example, the unemployed and elderly. I tried to develop conditions for the workshop that would attract these demographics. I held the workshops in areas of KZN where census results suggest most people do identify as Zulu. I also hosted the workshops on weekdays based on the assumption that participants would only be able to join if they did not have a regular job to attend. I made sure that the workshop started after the school drop-off time so that caregivers could join us. I also covered all associated transport and refreshment costs, so that there were no additional economic barriers to attending. In accordance with the advice given by Matthews and Ross (2010), I wanted to limit the group size to thirteen participants and so discussed this with the museum staff handling the RSVPs.

Groutville:

In Groutville, the group was eventually twenty-two people strong. While the Luthuli Museum had received far fewer confirmations for the event when I spoke with them the day before, many more people turned up in the morning and wanted to join the workshop. I was very reluctant to turn people away and, given my previous experience hosting events at the Luthuli Museum, I had thankfully over-catered, which meant we could accommodate the extra participants. Some participants did disappear to run other errands during the day and later returned, but we maintained a core group of eighteen participants for all activities. This group was the most youthful of all my workshops. Through conversations and observations, I estimate that only three participants (two males and one female) were older than thirty-five. Many were artists or aspiring artists and so had no fixed, regular income but were actively seeking employment. The group was, however, almost evenly split along gender lines.

Eshowe:

The group in Eshowe was quite different. Only six people responded to the RSVP and, other than one younger male in his thirties, all considered themselves mature: three of the participants were retired. Of the six, there were two male and four female participants. Half of the participants were, or had been, professionals, specifically educators and nurses.

Ulundi:

The final workshop in Ulundi constituted the most diverse group in terms of age. As in Groutville, several participants confirmed their attendance at the last moment and so this group ballooned to twenty-one people during the workshop morning sessions. The group was largely female, with just three, mature gentlemen involved. Most of the group did not have stable employment at the time of the workshop.

Dundee:

The group in Dundee was an anomaly. The participants did not all self-identify as Zulu and were not from the immediate local community; several travelled from Vryheid and Newcastle, both approximately 70km from Dundee, to attend the event. Three self-identified as White and one as Sotho. All the participants were involved in the heritage industry, either working directly in museums or as tour guides. Of the sixteen participants, there were nine men and seven women, but the women were noticeably quieter in the morning sessions than their male counterparts. As the transcript in Appendix 2.3 suggests, the White males tended to dominate the discussions in the first and final parts of the day, to the extent that they asked their Black colleagues to stand up so that they could better see their hair. In Chapter 8, I further discuss the limitations of my research, including how involved the host museum was in the RSVP process. The Dundee group demographic was certainly a consequence of this. While the data I collected during this workshop was still useful for my research, I realise that it is skewed and take account of this.

If I take a broader overview of all interlocutors involved in the four research workshops, there is a fairly diverse mix in terms of age and gender. Of the sixty participants, there were thirty-seven women and twenty-three men.¹⁵ There were elder male and female contributors as well as participants from both sexes in their

¹⁵ I am only including the participants who attended the entire workshop in this figure.

early twenties. At least ninety per cent of these participants self-identified as Zulu. While far from perfect, I am satisfied that overall the participants sufficiently met my criteria so that I could collect useable data.

Fieldwork Reports

The Pilot Workshop—Luthuli Museum, Groutville

With the Luthuli Museum's agreement, I selected Friday, 9 December 2016, for the first workshop. I prepared the invitation wording and worked with a translator to produce it also in isiZulu. The Luthuli Museum assisted with distributing the invitation (Appendix 3) within the surrounding community. As I later learned, many more people became aware of the event through word-of-mouth than actually saw the invitations and posters. The Luthuli Museum and I agreed that they would handle the RSVPs, since participants might struggle to communicate with me in English and my isiZulu would likely be insufficient to respond to more complex queries by telephone. Since the Luthuli Museum allowed me to use their venue, they also wanted to know who would attend. There are ethical issues with relying on a gatekeeper in this way and I do discuss these later in this chapter. In Chapter 8, I also discuss how this approach possibly impacted my results.

I kept my research aims foremost in my mind when designing the workshop schedule. Other key considerations included building in enough breaks for participants so that they didn't get too tired or restless and so that they had time to process any emotional responses, something Jordan (2015) strongly advises based on his extensive work with museums and source communities. Being cognisant that the Luthuli Museum's periurban location means power outages are not uncommon, I designed all activities so that they could proceed without electricity or an Internet connection. The first workshop schedule proceeded as follows:

Time	Session
09:30–10:00	Registration & Morning Tea
10:00–10:45	Welcome & information session
10:45–11:45	“What’s this and what’s its story?”
11:45–12:00	Break
12:00–12:45	“Retelling the Stories”
12:45–13:30	Lunch
13:30–14:30	“What’s in your Bag?”
14:30–15:00	“Your Museum”
15:00	Finish

Welcome & information session:

I conducted a lengthy welcome session in order to provide participants with a thorough overview of my research, establish the workshop ground rules (based on Chatham House rules), and give them time to read and sign the information sheets and consent forms. I worked with a translator in advance to produce these forms in both isiZulu and English (Appendix 4), and the participants chose which version they wanted to complete. I also asked if they agreed to the workshop being filmed and recorded. The ultimate objectives of this process were to ensure participants were fully informed about the research we were conducting and to establish trust between us. I stated explicitly that there was no obligation to remain at the workshop if participants felt uncomfortable with the activities and that, as per the information sheet, they could withdraw information within a specified timeframe. We concluded this session with a brief ice-breaker activity, where each participant spoke to and then introduced their neighbour. The longer first session proved fortunate since 22 people arrived at the Luthuli Museum to join the workshop, almost double the number that officially RSVP’d to the event. Most stayed for the duration of the workshop, but a handful disappeared to run other errands and so missed chunks of the sessions before returning for the end of the day

“What’s this and what’s its story?”:

For the “What’s this and what’s its story” session, I produced and printed postcards of six items from the Iziko collection. I shared items in this way, rather than on a Powerpoint slide, for example, so that the participants could take these home after the workshop and also to ensure this research material would be available for discussion, even if there was a power outage. I selected the following items for discussion during this workshop, identified by their former SAM object number—the associated image and catalogue card are available in Appendix 7:

- “Pot”—SAM item 1164
- “Doll”—SAM item 643
- “Puzzle”—SAM item 6732
- “Belt”—SAM item 8832
- “Armband”—SAM item 5010
- “Grain-bin (Model)”—SAM item 8505

The fact that I selected and filtered these items to share from the collection had implications for my research results, since I assumed a gatekeeper role. I chose to share just six items primarily for practical, time-based reasons. I aimed to present a diverse array of items within the chosen six. I selected the “pot” and “grain bin” as examples of Natal Nguni pottery and basketry, two of the largest subclassifications in this collection. I selected the “doll” due to the sparsity of archival information available and the potential opportunity to build on this. Conversely, Iziko possesses fairly extensive documentation about the “armband,” and so I hoped to cross-reference this. The “puzzle” is unique in the collection since it is the only item classified as such. The “belt” I chose because it was collected more recently than the other items and so, I hoped, might be more familiar to some participants.

For the first part of this session, I shared no other information about the items so that participants worked only with the images, rather than being influenced by the SAM’s categories and information structures. We discussed the items one-by-one.

Participants divided into four breakaway groups and had time to discuss the item within these small cohorts before sharing with the larger group. I hoped this would allow less confident participants to share their thoughts within their smaller group, even if they didn’t want to speak in front of a larger audience. My initial idea was to

ask participants to share anything they wanted about the item in the postcard so that I wouldn't lead their responses in any way. However, previous experience as both a workshop facilitator and participant made me think this was too open-ended and confusing for a first exercise, so I compiled a list of loose "thinking points" for the discussions:

- What do you think it is?
- What might it be made of?
- Do you have any stories about a similar object?
- What are the most important things we should know about this object?

I did stress that participants should feel free to ignore these questions but do recognise that the thinking points likely guided responses. After ten minutes, each group nominated a spokesperson who shared the results. I recorded these on a flipchart at the front of the room. My interest was less in the information participants gave about items (although this was fascinating in itself) than in the types or categories of information given so that I might compare these with the information prioritised by Miss Shaw's catalogue card system, explained in detail in the next chapter.

"Retelling the Stories":

Following a quick break, we moved into the second research session, "Retelling the Stories." Each group selected one of the items discussed in the previous session. There was some disagreement since each group wanted to focus on the "pot," an item we'd now renamed *ukhamba*, but the participants settled this quickly between themselves. I asked them to think about how they might communicate their newly compiled knowledge on this item to an audience unfamiliar with Zulu culture, and if they perceived any ethical issues in doing this. I gave each group a large sheet of flipchart paper and coloured marker pens to brainstorm their ideas. Once again, I gave the groups the option of nominating a spokesperson to come to the front of the room to present the results, or for the entire group to do this together; three opted for the latter. Two groups shared their results purely in isiZulu and, rather than interrupt their flow by requesting someone to simultaneously interpret, I decided to translate the results later from the video recording. While this exercise prompted a reiteration of the information this community considers most important, it was less successful in

provoking discussion about *how* to share the information. When I asked more specific questions about this at the end of each group presentation, some did share ideas about producing a television advert about their item, but I realised I needed to restructure this exercise for future workshops to better meet my specific objectives. At the end of the session, I shared photocopies of the SAM catalogue cards for each of the items discussed during the morning. Given our extensive discussions, the participants were generally surprised by the sparsity of information on the museum cards.



Figure 1: Participants at the Groutville workshop share their knowledge with the wider group.

“What’s in your Bag?”:

I scheduled the less intensive session, “What’s in your bag?” for immediately after the buffet lunch since this is often the time when participants struggle to concentrate in any workshop. I asked participants to divide into pairs and tell their neighbour about three items they either had with them that day, or usually carry, and why they are important to them. After ten minutes, each participant shared with the wider group their partner’s most significant item. My intention in this exercise was provoking participants to think more broadly about material culture items as contemporary, not merely historical. As we had discussed, many of the items

collected by museums in the past were chosen specifically because they were considered typical and representative of a cultural group. Having observed the participants interact with various objects during the morning sessions, I was interested to see which items they would consciously select as revealing something about themselves. Again, I kept a visible list of the results on a flipchart at the front of the room and photographed willing participants with their chosen item(s) at the end of the session. I intended to later compare this list with the items that currently constitute the Natal Nguni collection and to evaluate what any differences might expose about the collecting practices of the SAM. I wanted to see if these selected items could be classified within any of the current categories. Should this prove impossible, it would undermine the old SAM construction that Indigenous cultures were “primitive, timeless and unchanging,” an approach reflected by the use of fixed categories that are now no longer sufficient (Hamilton and Leibhammer 2016a, 22). Such changing results would instead support Bowker and Star’s (2000) contention that classification work is necessarily always ongoing. Significantly, if we recognise that classification systems are constructed, it means they are open “for change and flexibility” and so we *can* intervene (321).

“Your Museum”:

I hoped to explore this point further with the final activity, “Your Museum.” I opened the discussion to the whole group in the belief that people had spent enough time together to feel more comfortable speaking openly. I asked the participants to reflect on all the items we had considered during the day, both in the morning and afternoon sessions, and which of those they would include in a museum exhibition about their community today. I invited them to also think about other objects they might include in the exhibition that we had not discussed so far. At first, I started keeping the list on the same flipchart, but my request for spellings meant I was too slow for the participants and so they instead took control of the pens and paper and wrote their own items on the sheet, primarily using isiZulu names. Again, I wanted to compare this list with the items currently housed and exhibited at Iziko SAM and assess how similar or different these were and whether they told different narratives about communities in KZN than those constructed by the museum. I also hoped this would be an empowering final activity for the participants to imagine representing themselves within a museum, something their ancestors were historically denied.

At the end of the workshop, some of the participants approached me and asked if they could continue our conversations. We agreed to meet on the Monday to conduct a semi-structured small group interview. As part of the snowball effect, one of the participants gave me access to an *inyanga* (traditional healer) working close to the museum and I interviewed him at his home during my next trip to KZN, focusing specifically on items the SAM associated with traditional medicine.

Exploratory Trip to KZN:

Eshowe:

I travelled back to KZN again in mid-January 2017. Satisfied that the workshop should be run over just one day, I arranged to host the second group at the Vukani Museum, Eshowe, in early February. Again, my choice of venue was motivated by the SAM's earlier collecting locations and ease of access to the local community. Vivienne Garside, outgoing curator at the Vukani Museum, kindly put me in touch with her successors and by mid-January, we had agreed on the workshop date. I travelled to Eshowe the day after landing in Durban to meet the current curators, Zama Mbatha and Sizwe Mgwaba. The town, the oldest European settlement in Zululand, is 125km northwest of uMdloti, a small seaside town just north of Durban, where Albert and I stayed. Eshowe was once home to Cetshwayo, who built a kraal here in 1861 before becoming king. The British besieged the area in the 1879 Anglo-Zulu war and cemented their military presence by building Fort Nongqayi here in 1883. Today, the old fort forms part of Eshowe's museum village, a conglomerate that also includes the Vukani Museum. Mgwaba offered to act as English-isiZulu interpreter for the day, a role I now considered more essential, based on my pilot workshop. After discussing my target participants and sharing the pamphlet wording, Mbatha told me she would also share details of the workshop through her network of *gogos* (grandmothers). She agreed that the workshop results would be better if we included a mix of old and young participants.

Tugela Ferry:

As well as running a second workshop, this was an exploratory trip to KZN to consider locations for another two or three workshops. Based on my archival research, I highlighted Mahlabatini, Tugela Ferry, and Nongoma as sites of interest. After a few days in uMdloti, my son and I packed our bags into a *bakkie* and began our journey into Zululand. Sugarcane harvesting starts here in April and for miles after Tongaat, the land was thick with this rich, ripe crop. As we travelled further

inland, these fields gave way to an increasingly hilly landscape that's less obviously farmed, where the roadside is abutted by shrubbier plants and trees and plays host to roaming goats and cows. Every now and then, I saw white stone circles that mark the meeting and worship spaces of the Shembe Church. The traffic was mainly churchgoers: bakkies and taxis overloaded with people dressed in crisp white robes, as is Shembe tradition, or in their Sunday best.

The final pass before we dipped into Tugela Ferry was a dirt road barricaded from the plunging valley below by a low-level, dented crash barrier. Albert somehow slept through the whole bumpy experience. As we approached Tugela Ferry, we encountered increasing numbers of rondavels on the valley floor. At the town entrance, we passed a bakkie packed with young men standing in the open back. They wore bright yellow "Votela ANC" T-shirts with President Zuma's face plastered on the front. Tugela Ferry town was situated almost entirely around the main road. There was a large Spar, but most of the shops were more informal lean-tos, constructed from either old shipping containers or branches that propped up sheets of corrugated iron. Being Sunday afternoon, very little was on sale. In the middle of this was a small but sparkling white shopping centre, boasting mainly empty windows with TO LET signs posted in them. The tallest structures were the enormous billboards advertising both Sprite and Jacob Zuma. The latter marked the entrance to the metal bridge crossing the Tugela River.

Arriving on the other side, I almost missed the Church of Scotland Mission Hospital, one of the main reasons for choosing this route to Dundee rather than the more sensible N3 Highway. This was once home to Mrs Pool, one of Miss Shaw's entourage of middlemen during the 1960s. One of the more memorable lines from her letters to the SAM referred to a potter from whom she had acquired an item for the museum: "I see her sometimes in the village, but as she is a real heathen and obviously quite uneducated she might not be nearly as co-operative as the other woman has been." I imagined Mrs Pool might be alarmed at how Tugela Ferry and the hospital have morphed over the years. The gates, however, were still emblazoned with "Church of Scotland" and a white goat grazed nonchalantly beside them. Inside, to the left, stood an older, grey brick building with a red tile roof that must've been the original dwelling. A driveway dipped past this towards a more modern looking

hospital building of white metal and glass. A couple of minutes later we were driving uphill again, leaving Tugela Ferry behind.

Dundee:

I met with the Director of the Talana Museum, Pam McFadden, the next morning. A former colleague at Luthuli Museum connected us and I emailed her in December to arrange an appointment. The Talana Museum is on the outskirts of town and positioned at the bottom of Talana Hill where the first major battle of the Second South African War took place.¹⁶ Talana, in isiZulu, means “shelf for storing precious things.” The museum covers a vast number of topics in its buildings, ranging from Zulu and Indian culture to the South African Wars, and a history of coal production in South Africa. McFadden and I spoke for nearly two hours about her work at the Museum and my research before broaching the idea of running a workshop there. She agreed almost immediately to hosting the event at the end of March and to her staff assisting as gatekeepers to reach the wider community.

Ulundi:

After my meeting with McFadden, I drove straight from the Talana Museum to Melmoth, a small town between Ulundi and Eshowe, relatively near Mahlabatini. We spent the night there on an avocado farm, and next day I left early for Ulundi to meet Regina van Vuuren, Director of the KwaZulu Cultural Museum. This museum sits on the site on which King Cetshwayo’s kraal was once located before being burned to the ground by the British in 1879. The road to Ulundi is excellent and looks freshly tarred, a sign perhaps of how important this area is to the local government. The museum was built in the 1980s, a turbulent time in this part of the world, when clashes between the IFP and ANC, possibly aggravated by a third party, nearly plunged Natal and Zululand into civil war (Adam and Moodley 1992, Hovil 1999, Melander 2002). The building itself is low level and built in a hexagon, something van Vuuren later told me conforms to Zulu traditions but makes museum functions, like storing collections and mounting exhibitions, more of a challenge. Despite the dense clouds in the sky, even the slight breeze was very warm when I arrived. Van Vuuren had already agreed, in principle, to host the workshop, but wanted to meet to discuss details. Zameka Yamile, collections manager, and the

¹⁶ The Second South African War is also referred to as the Second Anglo-Boer War. I have chosen the former label because the latter excludes the many Africans, particularly Zulus, involved in and affected by the conflict.

education officer joined us for the meeting since they would help advertise the workshop to the surrounding community. It was nearly noon when we agreed on an early April date for the workshop. I then joined Yamile for a tour of the collections and the reconstruction of Cetshwayo's kraal, a short walk from the museum building. The sun was now high in the sky and the ground was baking beneath us. Close to the kraal was a small, locked building that holds the silver tankard Queen Victoria presented Cetshwayo in 1882 as a peace offering and the lion claw necklace that Cetshwayo famously wore.

Nongoma:

My expedition to Nongoma the following day was less successful. On the map, it looks far from everywhere. I had never been so far north in Zululand before and I was unsure what to expect on the journey. In fact, as the seat of King Goodwill Zwelethini's royal household and, arguably, the heart of Zulu culture, all roads leading to Nongoma are in perfect condition. This trip was the most speculative. I had exhausted my museum network, and no one in my network had contacts in Nongoma. According to Google, there is a community tourism office that's active in the area and I tried to contact them by telephone and email prior to my trip, but with no success. I felt I should still visit Nongoma while in Zululand, however, because the place occupied an extremely prominent space in the SAM's imagination even before Miss Shaw made trips here in the 1960s. The apartheid government's ethnologist, Nicolaas Jacobus van Warmelo, was an active collector in Nongoma and made significant donations originating from this area. Before him, the missionary Romanus Pally sent several items from the Benedictine Mission, Nongoma, in the 1930s

I spent almost an hour trying to find someone who worked at the community tourist centre but without luck. In terms of fieldwork design, the experience was a potent reminder that developing networks of gatekeepers is a lengthy and often frustrating task. Moreover, the project must be developed with a degree of flexibility since there is no guarantee of accessing the communities identified. I left the Tourist Information Centre feeling despondent and decided to drive back via the old Benedictine Mission, now the Benedictine Mission Hospital. The building was surrounded by high walls topped with rolls of razor wire. Getting inside didn't look

very easy or desirable. I drove slowly by to take some photos. From this angle, the building looked less menacing and probably more as it did in Miss Shaw's day.

The Second Workshop: Vukani Museum, Eshowe

When I arrived in Eshowe the next afternoon, it was 40 degrees Celsius. I dropped some cool drinks and other equipment at the Vukani Museum, but both I and the museum's curator, Mbatha, were concerned about hosting the workshop in a room with a metal roof and no air conditioning. Thankfully, when I woke the next morning, the temperature had dropped by fifteen degrees and there was a light rain. This was the first rain for weeks, however, and the water shortage in Eshowe was so severe that the taps only ran for a very limited time each day. Mbatha had already set up the workshop room beautifully, with a table at the front of the room displaying a clay pot, beer strainer (*isikheto*), knobkerrie (*isagila*) and a huge vase filled with purple flowers. She had placed a large grain basket (*isilulu*) on the floor beside it. The open wall meant participants had a view of the courtyard area and whitewashed museum buildings and, beyond these, the lush Dlinza forest.

As before, we began the workshop with the warm up exercise and divided into pairs. Just like the previous workshop, I wondered if everyone already knew each other; there was none of the awkwardness I have noticed during workshops in England when people are first forced to interact with strangers. The participants introduced one another largely in isiZulu, interspersed with English. The next exercise followed the same format as in the pilot workshop. I swapped, however, the "armband" and "doll" for items 9542 "club" and 8398 "skimmer," since these were both collected in Eshowe according to the catalogue cards. After a short break, we began our second activity, ostensibly aimed at determining what type of information this group would want to share with younger Zulu audiences, and how they would do this. While both groups were very keen to share information about the item itself, neither focused on the medium they would use to share the item. I had amended my instructions following the pilot workshop but realised I still needed to rework this activity for the next workshops to make it more explicit. Instead, I asked them more directly how they would share this information, citing a story Ayanda Ntuli had told earlier about accessing cultural information via Facebook.

I gave them copies of the catalogue cards for all the items we looked at, as well as the "doll" and *ingxotha*, which we didn't have time to discuss. I asked the group to

look at the cards and specifically at how and what information is recorded on them. Thandi Nxumalo stated that they had already answered this, but I wanted to clarify their answers. We compiled a list on the flipchart and the list we produced was quite revealing, as I discuss in Chapter 6. We ate lunch at the Adam's Outpost Restaurant, also part of the museum village. One participant, Sabelo Nkabinde, left us part way through lunch to fetch Nini Xulu's grandchildren from the school nearby. Mgwaba stepped into his place for the next "What's in your bag?" activity and partnered with Xulu. After a very short tea break we began the last activity, where I asked participants which items they would include in an exhibition about their community today. I sensed flagging energy levels by this point but am glad we managed to have this final discussion. Their answers, although few, are very different from those given at Luthuli Museum, as I discuss in Chapter 6.



Figure 2: (Left to right) Sabelo Nkabinde, Thandi Nxumalo, Khosi Shange, Nini Xulu and Zama Mbatha during lunchbreak at the Adam's Outpost Restaurant, Eshowe

Third Workshop: Talana Museum, Dundee

I made my third trip to KZN at the end of March 2017. I drove straight from Durban's King Shaka Airport to Dundee, a 330km journey. Arriving at Talana Museum the next day, I soon realised that my participants for the workshop were not my ideal target group, as I discussed earlier in this chapter. This did not mean, however, that there was no point collecting any data. We proceeded with the same format in the welcome and information session, as in the previous workshops. In the second session, "What's this and what's its story," I initially followed the same

format as in Groutville and Eshowe. We broke into four smaller groups and each discussed the “pot” before sharing observations with the wider group. For this workshop, I chose the following items for discussion:

- “Pot”—SAM item 1164
- “Doll”—SAM item 643
- “Medicine flask”—SAM item 11970
- “Stick”—SAM item 5982
- “Snuff Spoon”—SAM item 6734

The “Doll” was allegedly collected within relative proximity to Dundee, hence my choice. The “Stick” was also collected from the Battlefields area of KZN. The other three items I chose precisely because they were different from items I presented in the previous workshops and I wanted to see if they elicited different ideas about the types of information museums could record. At the end of our discussion about the “Pot,” a more outspoken participant suggested each group take responsibility for one of the remaining four objects. This did make sense in terms of timing. After the presentation of each item, I gave time for the other groups to share any additional observations they had made. In fact, this approach worked well as it avoided groups repeating the same information, and so I incorporated this change into the Ulundi programme.



Figure 3: Participants at Ulundi discuss their thoughts on the "Grain Basket" before sharing with the rest of the group.

The second research session, “Retelling the Stories,” was the most successful of all workshops in terms of data collection. I had made some alterations to this exercise, following the previous workshops. I gave each group a different item postcard and asked them to imagine they were a museum. On the back of each postcard I wrote a message from a fictional member of the public requesting that the museum provide more information about this item. I asked the groups to think about the many ways they might get the information to this person based on the age, background, and location of the person making the request.

Good day, I am a high school learner at Legon High School in Ghana. I would like to know more about this item for a school project that I am doing. Can you help? Thank you.”

Kwame Annan

kwameannan2005@yahoo.com

Figure 4: Example message given on back of the postcard

This extra instruction directed these groups to thinking more specifically about *how* they might share the information, as was my original objective, rather than *what* they might share, which had been the focus at both Groutville and Eshowe. This also led to a productive discussion about language issues, discussed further in Chapter 7.

We took lunch at The Miners’ Rest, Talana Museum’s onsite restaurant. As in the previous workshops, I facilitated the “What’s in your bag?” session immediately afterwards, taking photos of each participant with their item once they had shared it with the whole group. Given that not all participants self-identified as Zulu, I had to make a last-minute adjustment to the next planned exercise. Rather than ask them to choose words to describe their specifically Zulu community today, I instead asked them to simply describe their community. I had decided to include this extra exercise to ease the transition into the final “Your Museum” discussion as I hoped it might provoke participants to think more about how they see themselves and that this might, in turn, prompt greater reflection when choosing representative objects in the

last session. Interestingly, in the final session, each group did focus on exhibiting Zulu culture, even though I didn't limit them to this.

Fourth Workshop: KwaZulu-Cultural Museum, Ulundi

On the Sunday, I drove from Dundee to Ulundi via Bloedrivier and The Ncome Museum, two heritage sites that straddle either side of the river where the Voortrekkers and amaZulu clashed on 16 December 1838. My rental car was entirely unsuitable for the dirt road sections and I only arrived at my guesthouse in the early evening.

That I would encounter greater language difficulties during this workshop than in the others soon became apparent. Fortunately, two staff members from the museum joined the group and acted as interpreters whenever possible; for the rest of the discussions, I realised I would have to rely on translations of the video recordings. On a positive note, the group was the most diverse in terms of age groups of all the workshops and I was hopeful this would mean even more interesting results. The welcome and information sessions took longer than scheduled, largely because not everyone could read, and so other participants assisted with reading the isiZulu versions of the information and consent forms to them before everyone signed their copies. During the warm-up exercise, participants seemed reserved and I was relieved to move on to the first research session with breakaway groups. For this workshop, I chose the following items for discussion:

- “Pot”—SAM item 1164
- “Doll”—SAM item 643
- “Snuff Spoon”—SAM item 6734
- “Beaded girdle”—SAM item 10616
- “Sweet herb”—SAM item 10932
- “Grain bin – model”—SAM item 8505

Once again, I presented the “pot” first, since my experience in the previous workshops was that this item generated significant interest and discussion, giving people confidence to talk about the other items. The latter three items I chose because they were ostensibly collected in Mahlabatini, which is close to Ulundi, and I hoped these might provoke some local knowledge. I had presented the doll and snuff spoon at Dundee and I wanted a comparison for these.

Given time constraints, and based on my experience in Dundee, after sharing their thoughts on the “Pot” and “Grain bin model,” I asked each group to pick one of the remaining four items to discuss before sharing their knowledge with the wider group. These feedback sessions worked well with the “Sweet herb” item eliciting many questions and varying answers from the other groups. The “Doll,” however, provoked few responses besides confirming the suspicions of participants at other workshops that it is not Zulu.



Figure 5: Participants at Dundee discuss the Zulu Doll in smaller breakaway groups.

For the second research activity, I distributed postcards with fictional requests for information, as at Dundee. However, unlike at the Talana Museum, but as in Groutville and Eshowe, participants still focused on *what* information they would share about the item, rather than *how* they would share it. When I worked later with the translator to transcribe the recordings, I realised that our workshop interpreter communicated the instructions as follows, which explains the initial results:

Ntombela: So we will write all the information we can think of, what it's made of, how it is used, when, everything, so that the people from there can be helped and have a clearer understanding of what the thing from each group is. (Ulundi workshop, 2017)

In Chapter 8, I discuss in greater length the limitations of choosing to work with interpreters and translators. At the time, I followed the first group's feedback with an

explicit question, “So how would you send the information, how would you contact the person?” Perhaps picking up on this question, the second group did include in their feedback that they would email all the information they had shared. Once all groups had presented their ideas, I decided to open a more general group discussion about technology with the hope of gathering additional data about how people access information. As discussed in Chapter 7, this discussion produced interesting results that, for various reasons, differed from those collected at the other workshops.

After lunch, which I served in the workshop room, we continued with the “What’s in Your Bag?” exercise. Given the seating arrangement of haphazard rows that made moving about the room difficult, I opted to photograph participants with their items during the next break. I followed the same schedule as Dundee, asking participants to then regroup in their small cohorts and think about the words they would use to describe their community. Their responses were detailed, and I tried to pull individual words from these. One of the participants, Mpungose, presented her group’s responses as a spoken word poem, for which she received applause. Since the group was very energised by this activity, we skipped the scheduled break and moved straight into the final exercise. They proposed numerous items for their exhibition that included objects they considered both “traditional” and “modern,” as explored in Chapter 6. I served another round of teas, cool drinks and biscuits to the group while helping the KwaZulu Cultural Museum staff wash the dishes and rearrange the rooms. By 4pm, I was back on the road to the coast and King Shaka Airport.

Distributing the Results—Publishing Booklets

Tuhiwai Smith (1999) and Denzin et al. (2008) are highly critical of research methodologies in which facilitators fail to share the results with all contributors, especially if they are non-Indigenous and working with marginalised communities. Failing to do so diminishes academics’ accountability to their interlocutors, allowing them to make the neocolonial claim of ownership of the research. Cognisant of such criticism, I was determined to circulate the workshop research results to all participants. Before conducting the fieldwork, I imagined publishing the results on a private WordPress website to which participants would have full access and editing rights. However, as discussed in Chapter 7, I quickly realised during the workshops that limited Internet access would mean few interlocutors could actually share the

results this way. As Geismar (pers. comm. January 18, 2016) stresses, sharing results is only useful if they are in a format truly accessible to the participants.

Consequently, I decided to produce an analogue booklet for each workshop. In January 2017, I successfully applied for a King's College London Department of Digital Humanities Postgraduate Researcher Small Grant and received £300 to assist with the design and printing costs for the first publication. I worked with a South African based designer and the same local printer who had produced the postcards for the workshops. Once again, language was a serious limitation, but I did not have sufficient funds to translate the texts into isiZulu despite this being most participants' first language. Instead, I tried to use more accessible English, shorter sentences, and images to better illustrate points so that the booklets would be useful to more people. I realise that this form still excludes those participants who read no English whatsoever, or do not read in any language at all. For this reason, I wanted to emphasise the images, rather than the text. Subsequently, after producing the first booklet for participants in Groutville, I selected a new designer because she developed more visually appealing designs that gave the images preference. I worked with her for the other three booklets. (Copies of each workshop booklet are included as Appendix 5.)

My intention was to distribute each booklet to the museums in person. I did this in Groutville while on my second exploratory trip to KZN in February 2017. With kind permission from the Luthuli Museum staff, I contacted the participants via SMS and asked them to meet with me at the Museum so that I could give them their publications. For those participants who could not attend this meeting, I left copies at the Luthuli Museum so that they could collect them at a more convenient time. I made a fourth trip to KZN in early June 2017 to conduct workshop evaluations and combined this with distributing the workshop publication in Eshowe. Five of the six participants attended, and we celebrated our reunion with tea and cake at the Adam's Outpost Restaurant and Tea Room.

I was unable to deliver the Dundee and Ulundi booklets in person, however. My funding constraints and the designer's schedule meant we only produced the booklets at the beginning of July, shortly before my visa expired and I had to return to the UK. Instead, I couriered copies of the booklets to the Talana and KwaZulu

Cultural Museums and asked staff at those institutions to assist with distributing them. While not ideal, this still meant participants received copies of their results.

Evaluations

In June 2017, I travelled back to KZN to revisit three of my workshop sites in Ulundi, Groutville, and Eshowe to conduct the workshop evaluations. The time lapse between the workshop itself and the evaluation meant I could assess whether the content had impact beyond the actual workshop discussions. I decided not to return to the Talana Museum in Dundee, partly because travelling there takes so long and partly because the group I worked with didn't wholly identify itself as a descendant Zulu community or live in the immediate vicinity.

Before leaving Cape Town, I invested in two tablet devices and loaded these with an evaluation form using SurveyCTO software. As well as being an intuitive programme, SurveyCTO also allows users to switch easily between an English and isiZulu form. I worked again with a translator to produce the questions in both languages. The English version of this form and the full results are included as Appendix 6. The results offered another opportunity to collect data, which contributes to my findings in Chapters 6 and 7. I intentionally performed the evaluations on a digital device so that I could also evaluate, through participant observation, how comfortable my participants were with technology, something I discuss further in Chapter 7.

I distributed the first evaluation forms at the KwaZulu Cultural Museum, Ulundi. Although winter in KZN, the temperatures were still in the late twenties. Cape Town was about to be battered by a huge storm later in the week and it was difficult to believe this was the same country. It was nearly a three-hour drive to this museum from Umdloti and when I arrived, many participants were already waiting for me. I took muffins, juice boxes, and apples with me for the participants as well as print outs of photographs I took of them during their workshop. Only one person eagerly volunteered to use the tablet; the others were hesitant, particularly the *babas* (grandfathers), even when someone helped me better explain the task in isiZulu. It soon became clear that the problem was not just the tablets but also that the questions were written; illiteracy is still an issue here. As such, the participants decided that the best option was answering the survey in small groups, rather than

individually. From this exercise, I received seven completed evaluation forms, three of which were filled in by individuals and four by groups.

I spent the following day at the Luthuli Museum, with Albert in tow; I later found one of the participants feeding him his bodyweight in *Nik Naks* chips. I was disappointed not to see more of the group at the event but realised that it had been several months since the workshop and so participants' circumstances had changed, several for the better. I received text messages from two participants to tell me they were sitting university exams and so couldn't attend, while a couple of others told me they were now working and so could not leave their jobs. The five participants who were present had no trouble completing the evaluations on the tablet and needed only basic instructions from me about how to swipe from one screen to the next. They were younger and literate and two even opted to receive the questions in English, even if they gave answers in isiZulu.

I drove to Eshowe on my last full day in KZN. Five of the original six participants were waiting for me at the Vukani Museum, along with Mgwaba and Mbatha. They were once again dressed in their finery. I gave them copies of their workshop publication before starting the evaluation. Ntuli and Mgwaba assisted Xulu and Nkabinde with completing their evaluations, Xulu because she did not have her glasses with her and Nkabinde because he had a few issues navigating the tablet form. In total, from the three sites I visited, I received seventeen completed evaluations. While this is obviously a very small pool of people and makes it almost impossible to draw more general conclusions from the results, it does offer insights into the impact the workshop had on certain individuals and how future workshops might affect more participants. More significant for my immediate research, it was an opportunity to observe their relationship with digital devices in a user experience type setting.

FHYA Workshops:

In May 2017, I met with three researchers from the University of Cape Town's Archive and Public Culture Research Initiative (UCT-APC). They were all involved in UCT-APC's Five Hundred Year Archive Project (FHYA). Designed to facilitate research across institutional and less formal archives, the FHYA was, at that time, in the final stages of developing its online version, which brings together digital versions of text, visual, and sound archives pertaining to the geographic area

encompassing modern-day southern Swaziland, KZN, and the north Eastern Cape region of Southern Africa. Jo-Anne Duggan, a core member of the FHYA project team whose responsibilities include rolling the project out to different sets of people, proposed hosting a second round of workshops with my interlocutors, during which we could preview the FHYA online version. From my side, this was an opportunity to collect additional data about the participants' relationships with and use of technology and digitised collections, thus helping me better address my third research question, "*Can technology play a meaningful role in this process of decolonising knowledge production in South African museums?*"

I pitched this idea to the KwaZulu Cultural Museum, Vukani Museum and Luthuli Museum and, while all three were interested, a restricted timeframe meant we only conducted two FHYA workshops in Eshowe and Groutville. In preparation, Leibhammer, McNulty and I located items that were similar to those discussed during my previous workshops but that had already been loaded in the FHYA system by associated institutions. Duggan, McNulty, and Katie Garrett, another FHYA researcher, and I travelled back to KZN at the end of June to facilitate these events. We held the first workshop at Vukani Museum, Eshowe, with five participants from my original workshop, and the second on the following morning at Luthuli Museum, Groutville, with fourteen participants.

We planned a half-day event in each location and concluded each workshop with a lunch. After introducing the participants to the FHYA team and signing the consent forms, McNulty and I held a loosely structured question and answer session. Acting as "interviewer," I asked him several questions about the origin of FHYA's name, the kinds of items included in the system, the institutions they come from, and their provenance. Our intention was to give a layman's overview of the system. At Eshowe, in particular, participants interjected with their own questions, for example, on where the team intends to use the system. By this point, participants were keen to see the system in action. We asked participants to volunteer their surnames and demonstrated entering these into the search function. In Eshowe, the group was so small that we could all crowd around McNulty's laptop to see the results. Other than Nkabinde, all participants' surnames produced results, primarily from the James Stuart Archive, which we spent some time examining. Given how popular this activity was, the FHYA team and I decided to demonstrate this function earlier in the

day at the following Groutville workshop. Here, we connected the laptop to the Luthuli Museum projector and so were able to share more easily with the larger group. Significant difficulties in accessing the Internet at both locations, however, meant this activity took longer than intended. I discuss the wider implications of this in Chapter 7.

McNulty used the absence of “Nkabindes” in the FHYA system to segue into our next session. He demonstrated how users can register an account with the FHYA and comment on the content themselves. Duggan eloquently explained this to participants as “a way for you to talk, to speak to the objects... to, in a way, start correcting a lot of the things that the museums have done wrong.” Since Internet issues meant earlier sessions overran, we then interrupted the programme for lunch and, with the participants’ consent, continued the workshop afterwards at the Adams Outpost restaurant, as their WiFi connection was slightly faster. Our original intention was registering each participant with an FHYA account so that they could spend the final part of the workshop experimenting with the platform on their own digital devices. For various reasons, discussed in Chapter 7, this morphed into a group activity around the lunch table at Eshowe. We concluded the workshop in the early afternoon, almost two hours later than planned.

In Groutville we followed a similar format but introduced the surname activity earlier as a way of immediately engaging the participants with the FHYA system. Serious Internet issues delayed the start of our workshop and slowed the presentation overall, as it took significant time for items and information to load. Given the slow connection and late start, in the final session we registered just one participant with an FHYA account as an example to the group; we did not have sufficient time or bandwidth for participants to individually connect their devices to the Internet and experiment further with the system. Again, I discuss the many insights and research findings this situation produced in Chapter 7.

4.8. Ethical Considerations:

As Denzin et al. (2008) point out, qualitative research is never neutral and so always requires ethical consideration, especially when researching with historically marginalised communities. I applied twice to the College Research Ethics Committee for low risk ethical clearance, firstly so that I could interview professionals working in the heritage and digitisation sector, and secondly to conduct

the research workshops and other interviews with community members. Both applications were approved. I also submitted a minimal risk application to undertake archival research at Iziko.

My concerns about interviewing professionals were less profound and centred around their possible reluctance to discuss unsuccessful institutional projects. I addressed these by offering three levels of anonymity and reiterating participants' right to withdraw from the research up until a given date. Working with descendent communities posed far greater ethical risks. Conducting research as a white Westerner in less affluent areas of South Africa meant frequent and glaring power imbalances between me and my interlocutors. These privileges are almost impossible to counteract since they're inherent in my body. My decision to adopt a reflexive methodology, practicing humility, to attempt to learn isiZulu, and to show respect for both the items we discussed and all participants attending did, I hope, go some way towards ameliorating these problems. As Nana Oforiatta-Ayim (2018) concludes from her museum work in Ghana, "part of the beauty of the process is accepting that you're not perfect in any way."

In terms of the content we discussed, and as Jordan (2015) and Isaac (2015) both point out, encounters between source communities and material culture that has been removed from their community, sometimes forcibly, can be both empowering and emotional. Consequently, I designed my workshops so that there was time for sufficient breaks in case participants needed time to process their responses. I decided not to present the more ethically questionable items in Iziko's collection, for example Item 6733 "Sweatscraper," which archival research reveals was collected from a dead body. As well as worrying that this might cause participants grief, I was also aware that Iziko had no policy at that time for addressing unethical items.

I also dedicated a significant amount of time to explaining the information and consent forms at the start of the workshop and produced these in both English and isiZulu so that participants could be as fully informed as possible. Given my previous professional relationship with some of the hosting museums, I was concerned that they might pressurise participants to attend on my behalf. Thus, the longer information session was also an opportunity to reiterate that participation was entirely voluntary. At this stage, participants could also refuse permission for me to

record the workshops, but thankfully none did. This mitigated another potential risk of misquoting or misrepresenting participants, since I could transcribe the events more accurately from the video recording. There is still some risk in this regard, however, since I relied on a third-party translator to translate the isiZulu recordings into English and so cannot wholly guarantee that they are an accurate representation of what each participant said. Another ethical consideration, discussed further above, was distributing the research results to participants. I tried to address this by producing the print publications for each workshop group. Likewise, I committed to notifying the participants when this thesis is openly accessible to them.

4.9. Discussion

My next three chapters are analyses of the data collected and generated with my interlocutors during the historical archival research and fieldwork activities outlined above. Each chapter addresses one of the core research questions. Adopting a reflexive methodology, I collected data using a combination of methods: archival and document research, a case study approach, elements of participatory action research, participant observation, focus groups, and semi-structured interviews. I conducted research at both the Iziko Museums of South Africa in Cape Town, Western Cape, and at four key sites in Kwa-Zulu-Natal: Groutville, Eshowe, Ulundi, and Dundee. My research findings at Iziko determined the fieldwork I undertook in KZN, as I explain above, and my research objectives shaped the activities I engaged in to meet these objectives. There were certainly limitations to my research, most specifically during the fieldwork phase in KZN, when I worked with gatekeepers, in unfamiliar surroundings, and across cultural, generational, and linguistic boundaries, all of which entailed fascinating unpredictability. I encountered numerous ethical issues along the way and, as far as possible, adjusted my research to mitigate these. Despite these challenges, my strategy did allow me to collect a body of data sufficient for drawing conclusions so that I could attempt to answer my research questions.

5. Chapter 5 – Museums Made “Them”: Collecting and Cataloguing the South African Museum

5.1. Introduction

Tucked between the ground and first floors of the Iziko Social History Centre is the mezzanine level, where the institutional archives are kept. The lighting up here is stark and revealing. The walls, cabinets, and cupboards are either bright white or metallic grey, quite different from the dark wood carrels and shelves of the library below. There’s a window that stretches the length of the room and, as you enter, you’re greeted with a view of Devil’s Peak. This mountain looms behind Cape Town’s busy Plein and Mostert streets where people, cars, and combi taxis jostle noisily for space and attention. It’s where, at one point during my research stay, students protesting university fees ran from police firing tear gas and rubber bullets from the parliament buildings across the way.

The back wall of the room hosts several filing cabinets. One houses the catalogue cards for the old South African Museum’s (SAM) anthropology and ethnography collection. Perpendicular to this is another cabinet with slightly larger drawers that holds the catalogue cards from the old South African Cultural History Museum (SACHM). The decision to reunify these two cabinets, which were separated in the 1960s, was a conscious decision by Iziko staff in the newly opened Social History Centre in 2010 to address “entrenched and polarized categories of knowledge and power,” a legacy of the colonial and apartheid eras (Davison 2005, 101). Certainly, it’s a step towards overcoming disciplinary silos of the sort favoured by the old regimes, but simply moving the catalogue cards to a new building and reclassifying them does not inherently decolonise the collection; it does not automatically force an epistemological shift.

My argument is that despite their seemingly banal appearance, the catalogue cards inside these cabinets are themselves emblematic of the grossly unequal power relations to which Patricia Davison (2005) refers. In presenting us with a standard that, as Bowker and Star (2000) and Lampland and Star (2009b) suggest, appears fully formed and ahistorical, we can too easily overlook the sociocultural and ethical qualities embedded within the catalogue cards that determine what is and, more significantly, what is not included within them. Making such standards as those embodied by the catalogue cards appear “fixed and neutral” requires an enormous

amount of work to conceal all the decisions and negotiations that produced them in the first place (Lampland and Star 2009a, 14). In this case I agree with Miller (2005, 5) that an object, such as a catalogue card, is rendered powerful through its “humility,” whereby the less we are aware of them, the more powerful they can be.

The fact that many of the information fields on these cards are being transferred almost exactly into Iziko’s Logos Flow Digital Collections Management System (CMS) and that these cards were the main point of reference for auditors assessing objects during the 2016/17 GRAP 103 heritage asset audit suggests they are still perceived as ostensibly neutral purveyors of information.¹⁷ On the other hand, Iziko may recognise how deeply flawed the data is but, without the necessary resources to tackle this, the apparent banality of the catalogue cards permits the institution to overlook this for the time being. It is, however, precisely *because of* their prosaic form that these catalogue cards played a role in perpetuating the systemic violence of previous regimes and, arguably, continue to do so by retaining the power to shape what we know about this collection and the people it supposedly represents.

Through examining and revealing the work that went into producing both the SAM’s ethnographic collection and the catalogue cards that came to organise and mediate it, in this chapter I explore the “contradictions in modes and paradigms of collecting” that Ciraj Rassool, in his final year as Iziko Council Chairman in 2012/13, argued still needed addressing (Iziko Museums of South Africa 2013). This is a Foucauldian exercise of the type pursued in *The Order of Things* (1966) and *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969), the kind that inspired Bowker and Star’s (2000) work on classification systems, Lampland et al.’s (2009b) approach to exploring standards, and Turner’s (2015b) survey of cataloguing practices at the Smithsonian Institution’s NMNH. I also draw on Latour’s (1999) concept of blackboxing in seeking to expose the events and practices involved in constructing what I term the opaque SAM catalogue card. It is these historical processes that constructed and cemented the idea that Indigenous people not of European descent were the inferior “other” in South

¹⁷ The South Africa National Treasury’s GRAP-103 Accounting Guideline requires that all items classified as heritage assets – “assets that have cultural, environmental, historical, natural, scientific, technological or artistic significance and are held indefinitely for the benefit of present and future generations” - be given a monetary value (National Treasury of South Africa 2014, 6).

Africa. I argue that this same colonial ideology is embodied by the catalogue card classifications.

SAM annual reports dating back to 1855, accession registers, files of incoming and outgoing correspondence and, of course, the catalogue cards themselves were my archive for this inquiry. While any archive offers merely an incomplete sliver of the past, not least in this case because a fire at the SAM in 1900 destroyed nearly all documentation before this date, these records did allow me to chart the impact of historical ideologies and events on changing collecting and cataloguing practices at this museum. Through them, we see the SAM establish itself firmly as a colonial institution, witness anthropology emerge as a serious discipline and department at the museum, and comprehend the expanding network of actors involved in increasingly systematic and aggressive forms of ethnographic collecting. Many of the items were collected under Miss Shaw's tutelage at the SAM. Appointed in 1933 as the museum's first professional ethnologist, she held this role until her retirement in 1981 (Davison 2002). A founding member of SAMA, Miss Shaw's influence on the country's museum sector extended far beyond her immediate role at the SAM. Her work on classification systems, in particular, had a lasting impact on South Africa's museums and, as this thesis argues, is still felt today. She worked closely with Dr Nicolaas Jacobus van Warmelo, the government ethnologist for South Africa (1930–1969), whose own work on classifying and fixing “tribes” was subsequently used by the apartheid regime.

This archive also permits us to observe shifting ideas about what should be included in this collection and to chronicle a growing obsession with classifying it in a particular way. Finally, it allows us to recognise that this obsession significantly influenced early ideas about digitising knowledge and still impacts what knowledge is digitally (re)produced today.

The more recent records, albeit sparser, chart the collection's transformation within an emerging postcolonial, postapartheid institution. The archive also offers traces of Indigenous agency and glimpses of alternative narratives as well as of the explicit violence involved in constructing the collection, almost all of which are obscured by the catalogue cards and the many museum practices that produced them. Given Tuhiwai Smith (1999), Mudimbe (1988), and Chakrabarty's (2008) arguments that

serious decolonisation first requires revealing these very rules of practice that constructed “Indigenous” as “other” and “African” as “ahistorical,” the archival interrogation in this chapter is a step towards doing exactly that.

5.2. Establishing a Colonial Institution, 1825–1930s

The notion that colonialism constructed an unequal, binary relationship of power between the “West” and the other so that the other is cast as the West’s negative has been discussed extensively (Said [1978] 2003, [1993] 1994, Mudimbe 1988, 1994, Chakrabarty 2008, Spivak 1988, Fabian 1983). Likewise, the role played by museums in producing and disseminating the colonised other, in making differences, and imparting these as authoritative knowledge, has received significant attention in recent decades, not least within the museum studies field (Karp and Lavine 1991, Coombes 1994, Pearce 1995, Macdonald 2006b, Bennett 2006, Hooper-Greenhill 2008, Dubin 2009, Harrison, Byrne, and Clarke 2013, Silverman 2015).

Undoubtedly, the SAM was a quintessentially colonial invention at its inception in 1825; it was one of several museums based on a European idea that Bennett (2004) sees spreading with colonialism, with initially small institutions later evolving into more extensive and discipline specific ones. What these early year records suggest is that during the nineteenth century, the SAM laid the foundations for many of the networks and museum practices that evolved in the following decades.

5.3. Growing Colonial Networks

The museum’s foremost director and curator, Dr Andrew Smith, was the first in a long line of men with strong colonial connections to head this institution. Originally intended to “collect specimens, study and classify them and provide a service of public instruction,” the small museum mainly accessioned insects in its early days, as was apparently common in many museums at that time (Summers 1975, 5). We know little else about the earliest museum until it was re-established in 1855 and soon after incorporated as the SAM by Parliamentary Act No. 17 of 1857. Edward Layard, a civil engineer and architect employed by the Colonial Office, became SAM curator in 1855 and instigated a more meticulous reporting process. His earliest annual reports demonstrate his commitment to building a self-consciously colonial institution. We see this most overtly in statements by Layard expressing satisfaction that the museum had “become one of the institutions of the colony” (South African Museum 1859) and his hope that such institutions, by diffusing

knowledge, would “contribute to the trade and consequent prosperity of the colony” (South African Museum 1858).

In terms of the museum’s architecture and display mechanisms, Europe also remained the apex of the SAM trustees’ ambitions. Conveying regret in a letter to Layard that the SAM was not positioned to “carry out such extensive ideas as in England,” William Kohler, a trustee, did commit the museum to emulating “in humbler degree” the same classical style seen in museums in the “mother country” (Kohler 1857). In 1862, Layard travelled to New Zealand and Australia to inspect museums in those British colonies (South African Museum 1862). Some years later, Layard also justified purchasing the new glass vessels used to exhibit specimens on the grounds that they were the same as those used at the British Museum, Royal College of Surgeons, and Museum of Comparative Anatomy in Cambridge (South African Museum 1866). Such hierarchical ideas established in Layard’s time about the SAM’s inferior status compared with European museums laid the foundations for unequal interactions between institutions that persisted far beyond this period. In the 1930s, and again in the 1970s, the SAM curator Miss Shaw was sent to Europe to find out about museum practices there, evidence that this colonial propensity to “look North” far outlived British colonialism in this region (South African Museum 1938, 1980).

During Layard’s time, through a series of object exchanges, he also entwined the SAM within a nascent web in which Iziko remains today. Again, it was an intensely Eurocentric network, but this is unsurprising, since these connections were certainly more readily available to him than any Indigenous museum models even though, as Kreps (2006) makes clear, these alternatives did exist. In his first report in 1855, Layard proposed exchanges with curators in other colonies, something it seems he pursued successfully since a decade later the SAM included several collections donated from museums in Australia, as well as pieces from India, Europe, and China (South African Museum 1866). By 1869, the SAM was equally busy making up and forwarding collections “for exchange with the British Museum, State Museum in Boston (United States), and several eminent private polologists [*sic*]” (South African Museum 1869). Such institutional exchanges were, in fact, the SAM’s most systematic way of collecting during the nineteenth century. In this period, the Smithsonian also began donating its own annual reports to the SAM, thus

commencing another way of exchanging knowledge within this network. While not stated explicitly, we can imagine that the objects exchanged through this network were first interpreted through the lens of the donating institution and that this had some influence on how the receiving museum viewed them, as happened elsewhere. A Xhosa warrior's head-dress, *indwe*, for example, given to the Smithsonian by the British Museum of Natural History as part of an exchange in 1891, carried the same classifications assigned by the old institution with it when it moved to the new one and later became Smithsonian item number E151697-0.

5.3.1. Early Colonial Classifications

While the 1900 fire destroyed any catalogue records constructed by the SAM beforehand, the annual reports still give us insights into how the collections were ordered in this early period. Compared with mineral and zoological items, few ethnological objects entered the collection during these years. In his second report, Layard described dividing donations into two series: a "general" one, which was arranged chemically, and a "colonial" series. The latter included "weapons, native ornaments, and instruments," all arranged by nation of origin (Layard 1855b). The collection was later rearranged under Trimen into "Mammalia, Birds, Fishes, Reptiles, Minerals and Miscellaneous," with fabricated items seemingly included in the last category (South African Museum 1872). Here we see conscious decisions being made about classification systems, supporting Bowker and Star's (2000) case that there is nothing inherently natural about them. Both Layard and Trimen's categories morphed and disappeared over the coming years, as discussed below, but this is itself important in demonstrating the inherently historical nature of classification systems. Unlike later categories employed at the museum, Trimen's and his successor William Sclater's categories are more obviously laced with colonial ideas about racial hierarchies. In 1882, for example, Trimen further subdivided the "Miscellaneous" category into "Work of Civilized Races," which incorporated objects from Europe or the Asiatic, and "Native Implements" that seems to include only items accessioned from South Africa (South African Museum 1882).

By 1885, items previously classified as Native Implements were still grouped together but catalogued instead as "Work of Uncivilized Races," marking more obviously where the SAM located Indigenous South Africans in the colonial order

(South African Museum 1885). This category was still not fixed absolutely at this point: it reverted to “Native Implements” the following year, was renamed “Work of Native Races” in 1888, and then fluctuated between the two before being more firmly fixed as “Work of Uncivilized Races” in 1891. While the category name changed, what is more significant is that all items originating from Africa or made by a “North American Indian Native,” or Aboriginal people in Australia or New Zealand were grouped *together* under it and, in turn, distinctly separated from so-called European items. For these curators, place of origin, albeit often vague, seemed distinctly more important than any other aspect of the item when classifying objects. When Trimen accessioned “relics from Zimbabwe” in 1893, they too were classified as “Work of Uncivilized Races,” despite Trimen detailing the aesthetic complexity of the materials in the main body of the annual report (South African Museum 1893). Similarly, in 1915 the SAM accessioned seven clay figures of gemsboks, hartebeests, and springboks made by a “Bush native” and described them as being “perfect” in both shape and colour, but they were classified as ethnological items, not artworks or cultural items (South African Museum 1915). In this sense, we already see the underpinnings of the SACHM, established in the 1960s and discussed further below. This later decision to physically split the South African Museum collection along these lines seems less momentous given the institution’s longer history of conceiving of them as already different from one another.

5.3.2. Disciplining Anthropology

It was not until 1896 that donated ethnographic items ceased being classified as “Miscellaneous” and were instead listed as “Additions to the Department of Anthropology and Antiquities” (South African Museum 1896). This shift coincided with Trimen’s resignation due to ill health and the appointment of Mr William Lutley Sclater, formerly of Eton College and the Calcutta Museum, as the new SAM curator. Bushmen skeletons, previously classified as “Mammalia” in the reports were now conflated with objects under this new department. At this point, we can surmise that Anthropology was regarded as a lesser discipline by the museum since, unlike the Zoology and Geology Departments, the annual report for that year included no Anthropology departmental report. But this situation changed rapidly.

By the following year, the museum was quite clearly divided along disciplinary departmental lines, with each assuming recognition and significance, a shift Bennett

(2004) identifies as characteristic in the evolution of colonial museums. Each department—Vertebrates, Insects, Anthropology, Geology and Mineralogy, Invertebrates, and Marine Zoology—submitted a written departmental report to the annual report so that their work was made obvious to both the interested public and specialists. Written by the infamous Louis Albert Péringuey, the Anthropology Department reports hint at further sub-classifications. Such subcategories as “Stone implements of Paleo and Neolithic Periods of exotic origin, and implements and weapons from the Swiss Lake Dwellings,” “Domestic Utensils of the Damara, the Bechuana and Amakosa Races,” and “South African Basket and Grass Work” (South African Museum 1897) seem, nowadays, both diverse and somewhat bizarrely reminiscent of Borge’s Chinese animal classifications, which are mentioned by Foucault ([1966] 2002) in his preface to *The Order of Things*.

Over the next decade, this Anthropology Department grew and evolved exponentially. Davison (1990) identifies visits to the SAM by Henry Balfour, Curator of Pitts Rivers Museum, in 1899, and Alfred Court Haddon, leader of the Cambridge Torres Straits expedition, in 1905, as highly significant events for the department. Haddon’s speech to the British and South African Association for the Advancement of Science regarding the “lack of interest and expertise” in ethnological science in South Africa, in particular, provoked a response (153). There was certainly a huge increase in the number of specimens entering this department in that period: in 1903, the department accessioned 415 items, compared to 179 items the year before, and by 1910 the department, now named “Ethnology and Anthropology,” boasted a collection of 1,200 items, making it the second largest collection in the SAM (South African Museum 1902, 1903, 1910). In 1909, the Anthropology Department report constituted the longest of all departmental reports in the annual report for that year (South African Museum 1909).

This sudden burgeoning interest in anthropology at the SAM is reflective of the far wider development of anthropology as a discipline at that time. Gough (1968), Leclerc (1972), Asad et al. (1973) and Fabian (1983) were instrumental in highlighting the relationship between colonialism and anthropology as a discipline emerging from and rooted in the unequal power relationship between coloniser and colonised. Museologists have more recently focussed on the role museums played in fostering this colonial discipline (Shelton 2006, Harrison, Byrne, and Clarke 2013,

Bennett et al. 2017). Undoubtedly, we see this relationship enacted at the SAM, not just in the development of such a large department dedicated to advancing this discipline, but also in the particular narratives that shaped this department and the way these structured the collections.

During the department's earlier years, the SAM clearly engaged in so-called salvage ethnography, a practice dedicated to preserving remnants of apparently dying Indigenous races and a narrative prevalent amongst anthropologists worldwide at this time (Hochman 2014). Like those in America who constructed the myth of the vanishing Indian, SAM director Péringuey (1906–24), constructed a narrative around the “Bush Hottentot race” that advocated urgently obtaining material from “pure bred natives” before they merged out of existence (South African Museum 1911, 1897). At this time, Péringuey was unconcerned about collecting materials from the “Bantu” who he believed “will be long with us” (South African Museum 1918). However, this attitude shifted as the century proceeded and the “Bantu” were precisely the focus of Miss Shaw's own salvage ethnography for the SAM Anthropology Department from the 1940s onwards. It was a narrative buoyed by Professor Levi-Strauss's address at the Smithsonian Bicentennial Celebrations, in which he apparently urged “a greatly expanded anthropological field work in many parts of the world to record cultural data before it is too late;” what Reynolds (1966) interpreted for Miss Shaw as a call for a “salvage ethnography” programme. These wider developments in anthropology seemingly influenced the structure of the SAM department such that, by 1918, the department was subdivided into physical anthropology, antiquarian anthropology, and cultural anthropology (South African Museum 1918). In this sense, the department's structure started resembling the discipline's modern four-field approach normally associated with Franz Boas and American anthropology, although linguistics was never a specific site of focus for the SAM as it was for American museums (Turner 2015b).

Interestingly, even as anthropology became established as a discipline for studying difference and the other at the turn of the century, the SAM Department of Anthropology continued accessioning “European” items as well. In 1903, for example, Sclater reported that the Department of Anthropology had acquired a “number of interesting Colonial antiquities,” including an old “Slave bell” (South African Museum 1903). This bell later eschewed its anthropological status and,

being reclassified as a cultural item, was sent along with other items of “European descent” to the SACHM in the late 1950s before this museum officially opened in 1963/64. The slave bell’s catalogue card still resides in the same SACHM catalogue card drawers in the Iziko Social History Centre today. These drawers abut those containing cards from the former SAM, a collection that once included the slave bell in its ranks. As such, this item is just one example of the changing nature of classifications; the fact that it is now considered a social history item is but one classificatory shift in the slave bell’s biography. We cannot know this from looking at the catalogue card alone.

Significantly, anthropology’s emergence as a scientific discipline and as a SAM department that sought to classify people according to perceived differences coincided with the South African government’s formalisation of fixed racial classifications. Indeed, concurrent with Péringuey’s efforts to distinguish Hottentot from Bushman from Strand-Looper in 1911, the Union of South Africa government conducted its first national census. For the first time, people were officially classified according to race as “Bantu,” “Mixed and other coloured,” or “European/white” (Khalfani et al. 2005). In the SAM Annual Report for that same year, museum visitors were also grouped for the first time according to race:

“White: (males) 43,162, (females) 26,537; Coloured: (males) 8604, (females) 7135. Children: (No discrimination was made between White and Coloured) 22,523.” (South African Museum 1911)

What this suggests, I argue, is that the entire political system was broadly preoccupied with classifying and othering people, and that this both seeped into anthropology as well as coming from it. It was a project that influenced activities at the museum but was also reinforced by activities *at* the SAM in this period, particularly within the Department of Anthropology.

5.3.3. Human Objects and Objectification

Certainly, the most grotesque form of othering in which the SAM engaged was classifying Indigenous human beings as natural history objects. Through a three-fold process of collecting, displaying, and cataloguing Indigenous people, the SAM effectively excluded them from the civilised, evolved world and “marooned” them in the timeless natural world (Haraway 1984, Bennett 1995). The SAM’s treatment of colonised bodies as collectable objects was far from unique and echoed other

prominent museums' collecting and exhibiting practices at that time, both in South Africa (Legassick and Rassool 2015) and elsewhere at the British Museum (2017b), Smithsonian (Turner 2015a) and Tropenmuseum (Duuren, Kate, and Koninklijk Instituut voor de 2007). As discussed above, the SAM was embroiled in this broader network of museums and so certainly aware of these contemporary approaches. Where the SAM and other South African museums are arguably different is in how much longer they pursued these objectification practices, bolstered as they were by a prevailing apartheid ideology.¹⁸

In one of Layard's earliest reports, he detailed Mr van Reenen's donation of "eight Kafir figures" modelled by Mr Bell in England, to the museum. At the SAM they were initially exhibited in the centre of the room alongside "a case of coins," "a huge Boa, from the forests of South America," a "case containing mixed assortment of birds' eggs," but also "casts of celebrated men" and an "embroidered Greek jacket worn by the Poet Byron" (South African Museum 1856). At this stage, the figures, along with the people they represent, seem to have been presented as curiosities, objects simply intended to provoke awe and marvel. Within two decades, however, Indigenous human bodies increasingly became objects of science, with an emphasis on collecting the "real thing," rather than curious metonyms. At first, the SAM acquired human remains in a haphazard fashion that typified its wider collecting activities. In the 1870s, for example, the SAM received "a human skull in good preservation, from the "kitchen-middens" of the Cape Peninsula" (South African Museum 1872) and donations of "fragments of crania, etc, of Natives" and "charred remains from "kjokkenmodding" cave" (South African Museum 1877). All these were derogatorily classified as "Miscellaneous" items. Yet in 1892, we see donated human remains, this time a human skeleton, no longer being classified as miscellaneous. The skeleton is listed instead at the end of a number of zoological donations in the annual report and is categorised as "Mammalia" in the report's appendix (South African Museum 1892). By 1903, human remains were again reclassified and included in the new Department of Anthropology's collection, thereby affirming their status as other.

¹⁸ The SAM commissioned casts of human bodies at least as recently as 1975 (Shaw 1975a) and the Archaeology Department was still collecting human skeletal remains in 1990 (South African Museum 1991).

While these shifts in classifications suggests human remains were no longer an “afterthought” in the collections by the turn of the century, it was really during Péringuey’s directorship that the museum began systematically collecting human bodies and subjecting them to horrifying processes of dehumanisation. Péringuey’s “successes” in this area were lauded in the museum’s 1924 report following his death:

“[Péringuey’s] entrance on office was soon marked by a new line of effort; for, as a consequence of the visit of the British Association in 1905, he had come to realise the great importance of obtaining accurate photographs and casts of native races, and to this work, previously neglected in South Africa, he devoted himself with all his wonted enthusiasm, the result being that to-day the Cape Town collections of this character are held by anthropologists to be not only pre-eminent but practically unique.” (South African Museum 1924)

Aided by the appointment of Mr Drury, the SAM’s taxidermist, raiding burial sites and producing casts from human subjects became commonplace practices for collecting bodies (South African Museum 1910, 1926). During Drury’s career, he produced more than 60 life size casts of Indigenous people, a practice that the museum continued until at least the 1970s. The injustices of this period and their lingering impact on Indigenous people in South Africa have been well discussed elsewhere (Legassick and Rassool 2015, Kasibe 2017). Iziko is taking steps to redress them by instituting a formal repatriation policy and hosting such events as the Commonwealth Association of Museums Human Remains Management Workshop in February 2017.

It is unsurprising that there are no catalogue cards relating to human remains in the filing cabinets in this part of the Social History centre, even though they were once part of the same Department of Anthropology. These efforts to rehumanise and restore dignity to human remains within the Museum rest on a total rejection of colonial classifications that reified and objectified Indigenous bodies, a practice made possible by a hegemonic colonial epistemology. My argument is that while classification of human remains in this way is the most grotesque expression of the colonial museum that we saw emerge above, decolonising also means considering that other items within the collection may also have been classified and collected in ways that are fundamentally offensive to the people from whom they were taken. There need to be other, profound, epistemological shifts in this collection.

5.4. Assembling the Ethnographic Collection, 1930s–1980s

5.4.1. New Objects and Collectors

While Péringuey's death in 1924 did not mean that the Department of Anthropology stopped collecting human remains—as the directed burial site robbery in 1926 proves—it did coincide with a growing interest in collecting ethnographic objects. Indeed, this department's contribution to the 1927 Annual Report noticeably focuses on objects accessioned, such as a “beautifully made tobacco pipe,” rather than human remains, as in previous years. What hasn't necessarily changed is the salvage type mentality motivating the collecting. In his first annual report, the new director, Edward Leonard Gill, described initiating a collection of “samples of objects...of the class liable to become “bygones” [in Cape Town] without anyone noticing their disappearance” (South African Museum 1925). It is an interesting statement to the effect that cultural groups might be represented through their material culture, a point Davison (1990) also makes. The SAM responded to this mounting interest in collecting ethnographic objects by appointing A. J. H. Goodwin to the newly created “Honorary Keeper of the Ethnological and Archaeological Collections” position in 1930. They established another new, related role in 1936, “Assistant in Charge of the Ethnological Collections,” the first of Miss Shaw's many positions at the SAM over the following decades (South African Museum 1930, 1936).

Missionaries

Concurrent with this escalating interest in securing ethnographic objects was the museum's associated systematising of collecting practices in the 1930s. Initially, and as discussed above, the SAM acquired ethnographic objects in an almost chaotic fashion and classified them, by today's standards, in an equally arbitrary way for most of the nineteenth century. By the start of the twentieth century, the museum *had* started paying male collectors to procure items, but these were largely botanical in nature (South African Museum 1902). Likewise, collecting expeditions made by museum staff primarily concerned human remains or plants and insects (South African Museum 1911). Results from these earlier expeditions were mixed: in 1913, for example, a collector trained and sent to Southern Rhodesia “proved a failure” because “he was struck down almost immediately on his reaching the Mazoe district” (South African Museum 1913). Yet, two decades later, Director Gill acknowledged that “expeditions sent out by the Museum are by far the most

important source of new material,” despite planning no such collecting exercises for that year because funding was too limited (South African Museum 1932).

Responding to those constraints, the SAM began rigorously pursuing other avenues for collecting specifically ethnographic objects in this period, some of which were more fruitful than others. Early on, the museum identified missionaries as a potential network of collectors of “specimens...from the tribes among whom they work” (South African Museum 1935). The “pivotal role” missionaries played in shaping and interpreting ethnographic collections worldwide, often after receiving “wish lists” from powerful collectors and institutions, is extensively discussed by Corbey and Weener (2015). As they explain, the items missionaries donated characteristically portrayed Indigenous people in a negative, “uncivilised” light, largely as a means of justifying their own ongoing missionary activities. While initially the SAM received few responses through this network, in 1937 they did receive a number of items from one missionary, Romanus Pally, stationed at the Benedictine Mission in Nongoma, Zululand (Pally 1937), as I discuss later.

Native Commissioners

Following Miss Shaw’s appointment and her increasingly close, professional relationship with the national government ethnologist Nicolaas Jacobus van Warmelo, the SAM progressively exploited new networks of collectors even more intimately bound with the colonial-making project than missionaries. At van Warmelo’s behest, Miss Shaw agreed to enlist native commissioners as collectors, via the Department of Native Affairs. It was van Warmelo who secured agreement from this department, selected the native commissioner offices, and communicated the request (van Warmelo 1938). This mode of collecting certainly yielded results. A few months later, Miss Shaw reported receiving “two consignments from Port Shepstone...[and] a preliminary sending from Port St Johns” (Shaw 1939a).¹⁹ Over the coming year Miss Shaw received several other consignments, largely from Port Shepstone, items that constitute a significant contribution to the Natal Nguni collection today.

¹⁹ Port Shepstone sits on the southern coast of South Africa’s modern-day KwaZulu-Natal province while Port St John’s, once part of the old Transkei, is part of today’s Wild Coast in the Eastern Cape.

Justice Department

Another effort to involve state employees in the collecting network, this time in the Department of Justice, was, however, less successful. Given the increasingly stringent laws forbidding “Natives” to carry items the state considered weapons or “associated with forbidden practices,” the police now had powers to confiscate a wide variety of objects ranging from “spears” to “dagga pipes” to “witch doctors’ outfits,” all of which were interesting to museums in South Africa (Chubb 1940b). Subsequently, SAMA, again with the support of van Warmelo, suggested to the Department of Justice that all such items of “ethnographic interest” be given to museums for “exhibits” and “scientific study,” rather than being destroyed, especially given the perceived difficulty museums apparently now had in obtaining these items (Chubb 1940a). The Department of Justice, while not wholeheartedly opposed to the idea, gave supreme courts and magistrates discretion to decide case by case, rather than endorsing a blanket hand over to public museums, much to the South African Museums Association’s chagrin (Jansen 1940). Other than one instance in 1950 when a magistrate in Harding offered the SAM “poor quality” “assegais, shields and sticks” from a confiscated haul, there seems to be no instances of items in fact being collected this way (Magistrate of Harding 1950).

What is highly significant about these various collecting methods and networks, regardless of how many items they *actually* produced, is what they tell us about who the museum trusted to collect and how these agents, both within and outside the museum, shaped, or potentially shaped, the collection. We see colonial power relationships being exacted, whereby the very people being represented were considered incapable of representing themselves. More than that, we gain a sense that the collection was built, at this stage, more in line with what the museum wanted to see in its collection, rather than being motivated by a concern that the collection comprised items produced by, and circulating within, the communities the objects were later used to represent.

5.4.2. Seeking “Authentic” Africa

Of course, these notions of what should be in the collection were shaped by very colonial narratives. It is very easy to see commonalities in Zulu collections held by

different museums across the world.²⁰ Most include items loosely identified as spears, shields, pots, and beadwork. Given the global networks of exchange established between museums in the nineteenth century, it is not surprising that these institutions now boast similar materials. A spirit of “if they have one, we must have one” certainly prevailed and, as such, these institutions played a role in reinforcing ideas about what items must be included in a representative collection.

Moreover, these items had to represent an “authentic” African culture. The correspondence surrounding objects procured by the missionary Romanus Pally are an excellent example of this. After inspecting the items Pally had collected in the District of Nongoma, close to the Zululand royal kraal, Gill rejected them on the grounds they were “mission goods...things made by natives under European tuition or influence and not at all representative of their original handicrafts and ways of life” (Gill 1937). In fact, the SAM did accession at least some of Pally’s proffered donations: two baskets (Iziko items 5813 and 5814), a food mat (5819), a ladle (5816), a spoon (5817), a strainer (5815), and bag (5831). But the initial decision not to accept all the so-called mission goods is symptomatic of a colonial obsession with the “authentic,” with a narrative that depended on Indigenous people having no history or contact with other groups before the arrival of Europeans. Rather than perceive Pally’s items as material evidence that cultures shift and change over time in response to new exchanges, challenges and opportunities, and unwilling to consider that European contact was probably but one such historical encounter, the SAM intended its collection to represent a static, ahistorical culture, one that Leibhammer and Hamilton (2016a, 24) aptly describe as being “marooned out of time” by these museum practices. This European–Native African dichotomy, which is of the sort discussed extensively by Mudimbe (1988, 1994), and more specifically in the South African context by Wright and Mazel (1991) and Mazel and Ritchie (1994), is also evident in Miss Shaw’s communication with the superintendent of locations, Port Shepstone, from whom she received the dispatch of *ilala* grass baskets mentioned above. She quibbled whether the knot used between basket coils was actually African and, remaining “convinced the technique must be European

²⁰ This observation is based also on my own experience as a research fellow working with Zulu items at The Smithsonian as well as past roles working with African collections at the Canadian Royal Ontario Museum and World Museum in Liverpool along with visits to other museums and conversations with collections managers at those institutions.

taught,” asked “whether the natives of [his] district have no Indigenous pattern of coiled basketwork,” reasserting an assumption that there were two styles and cultures that must be entirely distinct, that there was an “authentic” African style (Shaw 1939b).

As well as shaping the collection around colonial notions of cultural authenticity, the SAM, and particularly Miss Shaw, played a significant role in determining *what* types of item were accessioned into the ethnographic collections. This is a significant point that emerges from the correspondence but is not immediately obvious from the catalogue cards. During the late 1930s, for example, Miss Shaw became very interested in basketwork. Writing to van Warmelo in 1938, she requested a “representative collection” of South African basketwork, a command he presumably filtered through to the network of native commissioner collectors since baskets soon started arriving at the SAM from these agents (Shaw 1938). It is an interest that persists. In the 1960s, she requested, and often received, Natal Nguni baskets from other “middlemen.” Her efforts were not always successful; for example, one contact wished to help with collecting basketwork but could not because, in “[her] experience the Zulus are very poor at handicrafts” (Barbara 1961).²¹ Yet, many other contacts, such as Miss Kelsall at the Natal Museum, who supplied a “beautifully made” basket in 1968 (Shaw 1968a), and Mrs Nxumalo of Mahlabatini, who sent her baskets in 1971 (Shaw 1971), *did* fulfil her requests.

That Miss Shaw was able to gather such a sizeable number of baskets during her career is quite remarkable, especially given her confession to Professor Preston-Whyte in 1982 that during their four field trips to KwaZulu undertaken before 1973, they experienced the “greatest difficulty in finding any basketry at all” (Shaw 1982). In fact, of the 991 “Natal Nguni” catalogue cards that I studied, 167 relate to baskets, making this item by far the best represented in this collection. Pottery, another of Miss Shaw’s research interests, is also very well represented, with at least 63 items catalogued as pots; other than baskets, only items classified as “ornaments_neck” constitute a greater proportion of the collection, with 131 catalogue cards. Taking all of this into consideration, a sense emerges that the ethnographic collection is not so

²¹ “Barbara” appears only by first name in Miss Shaw’s correspondence. Her letters suggest she lived in Zululand at some point in the early 1960s and that Miss Shaw requested her assistance in collecting, implicating her in the SAM’s wider web of collectors.

much representative of items being produced, used, and circulated by Natal Nguni people at this time, as it is reflective of the SAM's own interests and ideas on what *should* be included in an ethnographic collection.

5.4.3. Indigenous Agency and Questionable Collecting

Indeed, it seems the Museum had very little interest in involving the source community in its collecting practices. When asked in a questionnaire by the National Museum of Southern Rhodesia if the SAM received much assistance from “the native” in building up the SAM collection, Miss Shaw responded, “not at all” (Shaw 1942). This same narrative is borne out in the catalogue cards, on which Zulu names rarely appear in the equivalent “donor” section. Yet, the correspondence files hint at a different situation. The letters offer traces of wider collecting networks and the chance to explore the actors within them in ways similar to Emma Martin's (2012) exploration of the Charles Bell collection of Tibetan curios and Fiona Cheetham's (2012) research on novelty teapot collecting in the UK. Both draw on Actor Network Theory (ANT) to reveal the less visible actors who play vital roles in collecting networks, besides the people building the networks in the first place.

While it is difficult from the archives alone to identify nonhuman actors in the SAM collecting network, there are definitely glimpses of other, human actors crucial to its functioning but less acknowledged in official records, particularly the catalogue cards. Mrs Nxumalo is one example. Her name is scrawled on some of the catalogue cards under the “how and from whom obtained” section but it is only from the correspondence that we learn she was chairman of the local Mahlabatini branch of the Mother's Union (Shaw 1982). Through this, we can understand that she used her influential position to both purchase items from within her community and, significantly, to instruct community members to produce specific items for the SAM, such as a “breastcloth” in 1975 (SAM item 10613) and two “grain & food stores” in 1961 (SAM items 8505 and 8506). From the correspondence, we learn that the latter items were given to Mrs Nxumalo by a local schoolmaster, Mr Sibisi (whose name does not appear on the catalogue cards) and made by his pupils at the Mabedlane school (Nxumalo 1961). What this gives us is a sense of a network of collectors that extended far beyond the SAM's direct control. Within this, there are opportunities for Indigenous people to exert agency in terms of decisions they made that influenced, in some way, what entered the SAM collection. For example, Mrs

Nxumalo and Mr Sibisi's selection of those two grain and food stores over any others means they did, in this small way, play a role in shaping the collection so that it was not wholly directed by the museum, as Miss Shaw seemed to believe.

There are further traces of Indigenous people exerting, or attempting to exert, agency during the Museum's earlier history as well. In the 1912 Annual Report, for example, Péringuey explained it was "somewhat difficult to persuade" two "Bushmen" to demonstrate making a fire with their "kwé ka kka" digging stick, evidence that not everyone the museum encountered was a willing participant in the SAM's collecting missions, a fact little acknowledged by the Museum elsewhere (South African Museum 1912). Other hints of resistance are more oblique. Barbara's letter to Miss Shaw is one example. She describes wooden milk pails as worthy collectables but explains that the Zulus will "not part with [them] for fear of witchcraft," suggesting, implicitly, that this Zulu community had developed ideas about which items could and could not be given and sold to outsiders, and that they had resisted parting with those they considered more essential (Barbara 1961). We might see these as examples of Weiner's (1994, 394) "dense" objects, items loaded with cultural meaning and value that means they must be kept out of exchange circulations. Again, we see ways in which the source community influenced the nature of the collection, this time by the role it played in *preventing* certain items from entering the collection. We would be mistaken, however, to assume that the SAM respected the community's ideas on which items might permissibly enter the museum; there are, in fact, ten milk pails in the Natal Nguni collection. The grass circumcision dress, collected by H Dixon, active in the Northern Transvaal, is perhaps a more clear-cut example of cultural violation. Writing to Miss Shaw, he shared that he had "at last found a boy willing to make a grass circumcision dress," a process presumably made difficult by Nixon acknowledging that if the Chief found out, he would "kick up a terrific fuss" (Dixon 1959). Seemingly unconcerned that adding this item to the SAM collection was ethically dubious, Miss Shaw simply replied, "good news that the circumcision dress is in manufacture!" (Shaw 1959).

One of the most ethically troubling items I encountered in my research was object number 6733, classified by the SAM as a Natal Nguni "sweatscraper," donated to the SAM as part of the Dunn Collection. E J Dunn is first listed as a donor in the 1877 Annual Report for his gift of "stone implements" (South African Museum 1877). He

appalling history, and that its owner remains nameless and was effectively written out of the records, makes it even more indicative of the systemically violent and deeply unequal nature of colonial relations that persisted long beyond the initial, belligerent confrontations.

As discussed above, Iziko has already taken important steps to address the highly unethical practice of collecting human remains. Similar steps also need to be taken to tackle past practices that mean Iziko now sits with numerous problematic items in its collection, such as the sweatscraper. However, while human remains are obviously identifiable as unethically collected, uncovering the more questionable items in the SAM ethnographic collection requires significant further research, largely because they have been sanitised by cataloguing practices that treat them as ahistorical, representative objects. Revealing these objects' troublesome biographies requires interrogating the cataloguing practices that flattened them in the first place. It is an important exercise, since activities like the GRAP-103 audit rely on the catalogue cards as a source of reliable information about items in the collection. While there are wider ethical issues around applying monetary values to heritage items, it is possible to wonder whether the audit would consider an item more, or less, valuable based on a problematic history, if the auditors knew about it.

5.5. Systematic Cataloguing, 1940–1980s

The SAM made attempts at cataloguing its collection as early as 1858 and published the first part of a ledger-system catalogue in 1862. In his history of the South African Museum, Raymond Summers (1975) credits SAM Director William Sclater with establishing the first cataloguing system at the start of the twentieth century, when he introduced a series of bound registers in which data was entered against an object number for all known items. Péringuey also stressed the need to “classify, collate and tabulate all these relics in a *Corpus*” as a means of supplementing a proposed Parliament Bill to prevent cultural artefacts being removed from South Africa and taken overseas (South African Museum 1910). But it was not until the 1940s that the SAM engaged seriously in cataloguing its collection in a format still recognisable today. Miss Shaw, employed initially as the Department of Anthropology's assistant, played an instrumental role in this process.

Once again, van Warmelo also proved influential in this activity. Writing to E Joan Houghton, assistant professional officer at the Transvaal Museum, to ask for her cooperation in developing a standard cataloguing method, Miss Shaw shared “a suggestion made by Dr v. Warmelo a little while ago that a national catalogue of ethnographic material should be made” and that it include a way of identifying information sources so that the material might be studied “scientifically” (Shaw 1940a). What we see hinted at here is both a state interest and intervention in museum practices and a definite shift towards studying objects and material culture from a scientific standpoint. By adopting certain standards for collecting and documenting observations, ethnographic objects in museums worldwide became specimens for study through which the other might be scientifically understood, and no less so at the SAM (Turner 2015b, Davison 1990). As Ross Parry (2007) has noted, museum knowledge was not always so scientific. It is only possible to guess how far the South African state’s burgeoning interest in scientifically knowing groups of people, manifested a few years later in apartheid, contributed towards this cataloguing project, and how far the shift simply reflected wider museum practices at that time, as Davison (1990) suggests it does.

5.5.1. Miss Shaw’s Influence

Miss Shaw first outlined her cataloguing scheme in the 1940 South African Museums Association Bulletin (SAMAB). Yet her system did not appear out of nowhere and in isolation: a quick review of other papers presented at SAMA during this period show that many in this profession were preoccupied by classifying and standardising knowledge. Dr Lawrence, Natal Museum, had previously presented the “Method of Cataloguing the Library of the Natal Museum” (1939) and Mr Kennedy, acting director of the Africana Museum, followed Miss Shaw’s paper with a publication on “The Adaptation of Bibliographical Classification to Museum Exhibits” (1940). All proposed a need for a more scientific approach to studying ethnography, with Miss Shaw decrying the current method of cataloguing using an accessions book because it “fails...to be of much assistance for the scientific study of the material listed in it” (Shaw 1940b, 118). Accordingly, under Miss Shaw’s system, each object received a corresponding, separate card that included the following information fields:

- Registered number of object, preceded by museum’s initials;

- Tribe or group number;
- Locality where object was obtained;
- Name of object according to agreed terminology;
- Native name of object;
- Photo or sketch of object;
- Description including “information obtained with the specimen and pertaining to it alone e.g. “belonged to Dingaan’s favourite wife”;
- How and where obtained;
- Object’s location in museum.

Registered Number.		Tribe : Group	
		Locality :	
		District : Province.	
Quantity and name of object.		Native name.	
Photograph or sketch with measurements.	a) Materials, Appearance, Etc.,		
	b) Information obtained with it.		
	Corresp.	How and from whom obtained.	
Where in museum.		Date:	

Figure 7: Miss Shaw’s catalogue card

In 1942, Miss Shaw reported that she had sent the scheme to museums within the South African Union but, given the Second World War, full implementation would likely be delayed, despite favourable responses (South African Museum 1942). As soon as 1946, however, the SAM declared it had completed the preliminary work on the catalogue system and could now produce the new card index, outlined above in Figure 7 (South African Museum 1946). Through this card-making process, we see objects morph further from being three-dimensional artefacts to becoming paper-based inscriptions, a situation David Jenkins (1994) and Turner (2015b) also identify

as increasingly common in North American ethnographic museums at this time. As this occurred, the object's distinct materiality diminished.

There is precedent for Miss Shaw selecting the information categories given above, not least in the accession register entries started in Sclater's time. Even before that, when accessioned items were merely recorded in the Annual Report appendices, the SAM classified objects typologically and presented information about them under tabular headings. In the 1875 annual report, for example, the SAM recorded the item's "Nature of specimens," "Locality," and "Name of Donor." There is also a fourth column titled "Remarks" that is left blank for all miscellaneous items with the exception of an "Earthenware Pot," where the curator used the space to record that it was "Found by Mr Poggenpoel" and "filled with black micaceous sand." Over the years, the "Remarks" column disappeared, and the information categories became more discrete. The category names also changed so that in 1877, for example, "Name of Donor" was replaced with "How and from who obtained." Similarly, Miss Shaw's correspondence with colleagues at other museums reveal the compromises inherent in her cataloguing project. In a draft letter to Dr van Hoepen at the National Museum, Bloemfontein, Miss Shaw described "much consultation meaning headaches" over producing a terminology for South African material culture as a means of facilitating cataloguing (Shaw 1941b). Very often, the categories she chose seem rudimentary and crass. Asked by van Hoepen where she drew the line between "Native" and "European" cultures, Miss Shaw suggested "include[ing] roughly everything made by natives for their own use...for instance, they do not make cars, & I am doubtful about waggons & ploughs, but they do make + use sledges...one cannot pretend to make an absolute final list" (Shaw 1941a).

Evident here is the lengthy process of negotiation that the Museum went through in deciding which object information should be recorded and, equally importantly, what is implicitly not recorded. There are clearly no given, natural information categories for describing ethnographic objects in museums; yet, the final iteration of Miss Shaw's catalogue card and corresponding terminology belies this fact. As Lampland explains, stabilizing knowledge demands astonishing levels of work for classifications and standards to appear "fixed and neutral" and so able to obscure all the work that went into their creation in the first place (Lampland and Star 2009a, 14). This is the very paradox at the heart of Latour's (1999) blackboxing concept: the

more science and technology succeed, the more opaque and incomprehensible they become. In this sense, Miss Shaw's catalogue card is a textbook case of Latour's black box.

Recognising this, we see that even the layout of the catalogue card itself is highly constructed and reflective of a particular, colonial epistemology. The cards, argued Miss Shaw, should make the "most important" items the most prominent and so she advised putting "the number, the name of the object and the tribe" at the top (Shaw 1940b, 121). Three decades later, in spite of the wider political upheaval in South Africa, she remained adamant that accession number, the tribe, and the name of the object were "the three most important items on the card from the point of view of reference" and so informed Lelong Immelman, director of the South African Museum Services, that these should "share the most prominent places" (Shaw 1975b). Of course the view that these items are the most important is a subjective one and, as such, Miss Shaw's catalogue card is a quintessential example of how the success of a particular standard can be explained not by a "natural law" but by a number of human activities, specifically being favoured by a more powerful community of practice (Bowker and Star 2000, 14). It is no accident that the name of the maker or artist is not included in the catalogue card for ethnographic items but *is* included in the catalogue card designed for the Cultural History Museum in the 1960s. Nor is it inevitable that the "Native name" of an ethnographic item was not prioritised in Miss Shaw's layout and was, in fact, frequently left blank. Both these details are indicative of colonial power relations at play.

5.5.2. The South African Cultural History Museum (SACHM)

Establishing the Cultural History Museum was probably the most concrete expression of colonial systems of classification. As I have discussed above, objects that the SAM considered "European," or from such "civilised" cultures as ancient China and India, had always been conceptually separated from those made by Indigenous peoples. Until the 1950s, however, they were also catalogued as ethnographic items and were broadly part of the same museum collection. They were, at least, housed in the same buildings. As Mazel (2013) persuasively argues, it can be no coincidence that during the early years of apartheid, the SAM started taking steps to *physically* separate these items as well, even if Helene Vollgraaff (1998) and Davison (2005) suggest issues of space and a public thirst for a separate

Cultural History Museum were the major motivating factors. Mention of this new Cultural History institution first appears in the 1958 annual report when new funds were received for the posts of historian and assistant, something the SAM saw as the “first step towards the formation of a Cultural-Historic Museum in Cape Town” (South African Museum 1958). In the 1959 report, the museum shared that the Old Supreme Court building was being given over to housing cultural history displays. The 1963–64 annual report communicated that the museum had now been divided into two sections, natural history (SAM) and cultural history (SACHM) (South African Museum 1964). Cast quite firmly as natural history by this division, Indigenous groups in South Africa were thus further denied a history or dynamic culture, a fact exacerbated by the presence of the SACHM from which they were intentionally excluded.

As discussions ensued as to what items should be transferred to the Old Supreme Court, the newly established Department of History reported that “the line dividing history from anthropology on the one hand, and from recent archaeology on the other, was not always clear, and subject to revision” (South African Museum 1959). Once again, we see how rudimentary classification work can be. Certainly, this division was not immediate and always obvious to the public. When, for example, Miss Koch made a donation in 1968, she sent Zulu spears and clubs, a German hunting knife, and the coachman’s whip altogether to the SAM, only to be told by Miss Shaw that the latter were, in fact, cultural history items and so should have been sent to the SACHM instead (Shaw 1968b).

Eventually, by 1964, approximately 9000 items were reclassified as Cultural History and transferred from the SAM to the SACHM. These items, which included a table clock from Paris, candlesticks from the Netherlands, a fish slicer from London, and a scent bottle from Berlin, are listed in the transfer register. Their cards also constitute the first drawers of the old SACHM filing cabinet. Without being party to this knowledge, however, it is far from obvious from the catalogue cards alone that these items have in fact assumed various identities *since* entering the museum. While being initially accessioned as museum objects did interrupt their “biographical expectations,” this event did not entirely take them out of time, since wider political and social events dramatically shaped their history *within* the institution(s) (Kopytoff 2009, 67).

5.5.3. Tribing the Archive²²

The “Tribe” category that Miss Shaw prioritised in the ethnographic collection catalogue is probably the most obvious expression of the colonial order. Here, once again, van Warmelo’s influence was keenly felt. In her later cataloguing guidelines, Miss Shaw included a table of South African tribes “named and numbered according to group” to assist museum cataloguers (Shaw 1958). This number was included in the top right corner of the catalogue card. It is based almost entirely on Dr van Warmelo’s *A Preliminary Survey of the Bantu Tribes of Southern Africa* (1935). So integral is van Warmelo’s *Survey* to Miss Shaw’s work that she rejected a loan request from Erich Bigalke, ethnologist at the East London Museum on the grounds that she still used it “daily” in 1966 (Shaw 1966).

For van Warmelo, the numbering of the tribes was not simply consecutive “but reflects the classification that has been adopted. The number given to a particular tribe is therefore in itself a classificatory index to the group and subgroup to which that tribe belongs” (van Warmelo 1935, 59). Essentially, the Bantu tribes were grouped by van Warmelo into:

1. Nguni
2. Tonga
3. Sotho
4. Venda
5. Lemba and Others

These numbers were retained in Miss Shaw’s system so that, for example, number 11 represents Group 1 of Division 1 i.e. “Cape Tribes Proper.” It’s interesting to see the reasoning, frequently capricious, behind building these classifications since this is rarely a transparent process. Interestingly, van Warmelo acknowledged this fact, noting that naming tribes was problematic since,

“...not infrequently one comes across a tribal name that gives rise to various doubts, e.g., as to whether it is the correct name, an archaic or alternative name, an incorrect variant, a collective term, a geographical designation, a derivation from a chief’s name, a linguistical label or merely an abusive epithet.” (van Warmelo 1935, 5)

²² Title adapted from Hamilton and Leibhammer (2016a).

Regarding the broad Natal Nguni classification, a group numbered 13, he also suggested that in future “it will be possible to arrive at a further sub-division, and with it, at a satisfactory classification of all the tribes now comprised under [his] Natal group” (van Warmelo 1935, 13). Although this seemingly never happened, his statement reflects an understanding that classification is an ongoing process, a dynamism that is obscured by the tribe numbers that finally appear in the catalogue card.

Further, van Warmelo (1935, 59) stated that his term “Nguni,” in “meaning by no means coincides with the original content of the native tribal name *abeNguni*. The main reason for its adoption lies in the absence of any other name that would be equally suitable.” He suggested that “a parallel case is that of the term ‘Bantu’, which though chosen almost at random, met a real need and accordingly took its place in...scientific vocabulary almost immediately” (59). Van Warmelo’s classifications persisted in the apartheid era and seemingly became fixed. A. O. Jackson’s (1975) *The Ethnic Composition of the Ciskei and Transkei* essentially maintains the major groupings and numbering system found in van Warmelo’s work. He merely “tinkers” with the details by inserting “new” groups into existing classifications, categories he argued are necessary because the 1951 Bantu Authorities Act “roused...dormant tribal consciousness” and restored identities overlooked for decades (Jackson 1975, 1). It is a work the Iziko Curator, Gerald Klinghardt (pers. comm., October 11, 2016), describes as representative of the way classification systems propped up the apartheid homelands. What is astonishing is how arbitrary these designations were and yet how significant was the lived impact of being classified as part of one group, rather than another, in South Africa. Indeed, as Bowker and Star (2000) argue, while classifications are unnatural and constructed, it is their real-world consequences that makes them worthy of far greater attention than they have often received.

Certainly, van Warmelo and Shaw’s fascination with classifying people and cultures in fixed, discrete groups for the purposes of museum cataloguing was concomitant with the apartheid government’s mounting interest in classifying citizens according to race. Shaw’s original system does predate the Population Registration Act No. 30 of 1950, arguably the cornerstone of apartheid; her updated 1958 system and its adoption by other institutions in Southern Africa did, however, coincide with various

amendments to the act aimed at refining racial categories so that people could be classified as belonging to just one group. Under the original Population Registration Act, appeal for reclassification was possible, and by 1958 the Secretary for the Interior had classified 52,598 “borderline cases” with another 100,000 cases awaiting decision (Erasmus 2007, 84). In 1959, a major amendment by parliament further divided the Coloured group into seven sub-categories, including the “Other Asiatics” group. Both these borderline cases and the creation of the indiscrete category “Other Asiatics” must be seen as evidence that even the National Party government understood that some people would never fit neatly into a classification scheme (Erasmus 2007, 80).

As Yvonne Erasmus’s (2007) work demonstrates, racial classification in apartheid South Africa was based on three traits: appearance, acceptance, and descent. Depending on the changing political situation in South Africa, the government deemed one characteristic more or less significant than the others at certain times. What this suggests is that the government’s original intention that everyone would be classified into a single racial category was never realised; instead, trends in reclassification imply that “race had a flexible and fluid component to it” (101). Likewise, as my later chapters discuss, the SAM’s attempts to draw strict boundaries around constructed tribal categories so that objects might belong to just one of van Warmelo and Shaw’s prescribed groups frequently led to misclassifications, many of which have yet to be identified as such. Given the close ties established between the SAM and state, embodied by Miss Shaw and van Warmelo’s partnership, we might infer that the museum had an at least implicit role in propagating apartheid *style* classification, a system that did, of course, have its roots in British colonialism.

While the process of constructing the tribal classifications themselves is not evident in the catalogue card, the system of assigning objects to tribes is slightly more transparent. This is thanks to Miss Shaw developing a system for authenticating information. Indeed, Davison (1990, 156) too generously suggests that this grading system showed “sensitivity” to the very “problems of misinterpretation” under discussion, a perspective that, in her work, characteristically protects Miss Shaw and her contemporaries against outright accusations of colonialism and racism. Once again, Shaw credited van Warmelo with this authentication idea, something she considered highly important if material was going to be studied scientifically (Shaw

1940a). Her system depended on marking such information as “Tribe” or “Locality” on the card with a letter from the key outlined below. The letter indicated how the cataloguer reached their conclusion:

- A:** Information supplied by donor, seller or collector and known to be authentic
- B:** Information supplied by donor, seller or collector but not certain
- C:** Conclusion from known collecting field of donor, seller or collector
- D:** Conclusion from evidence in record book or on label on specimen
- E:** Conclusion from correspondence or conversation
- F:** Conclusion from comparison with other authentic specimens
- G:** Conclusion from nature of materials or technique used
- H:** Conclusion from native name given
- I:** Conclusion from place name given
- J:** Conclusion from tribal name given
- K:** Conclusion from literature


SAM 8399		ZULU 13 ^A	
BASKET + lid		Eshowe ^A	Natal
		Imbenge ^B	
Kop 5134			
HORTON, C.T.			
Grove 927/a		Bght. from potter nr. Eshowe. S.A.M. Expedition May 1961.	

Figure 8: This catalogue card is marked with Miss Shaw’s authentication code to show that the object’s tribe is “authentic” but the object’s Zulu name is still “not certain,” despite being provided by the donor, seller, or collector.

The catalogue cards in the former Natal Nguni collection are indeed littered with handwritten letters corresponding to Miss Shaw's code as, for example, in Figure 8. While Klinghardt (personal communication, 2016) says that her original key does not explicitly favour one source of information over another, in a 1965 letter to the Director of the Natal Museum, she does state that "there are other categories which involve judgment of the object but A & B are the only two that are of value for reference work" (Shaw 1965). What is striking about this key code is the absence of any category suggesting that the originating community might be a source of reliable information about the items, a fact Davison (1990) overlooks entirely when discussing the procedure's merits. This is most disconcerting since, at times, South African museums *did* request assistance in both collecting and verifying information from people perceived as source community members. Margaret De Lange, the East London Museum ethnologist in 1960, for example, wrote Miss Shaw a detailed account of her "Xhosa girl" and staff identifying paint materials by their Indigenous names and explaining how they were used, by whom, and when (De Lange 1960).

There was, however, a pervasive scepticism about the reliability of Indigenous informants. De Lange tempers her enthusiasm for this apparently valuable information with an aside that one cannot rely implicitly on what one person tells you of her customs. In another correspondence, we see the SAM seek advice from Dr Malcolm in the Department of Social Anthropology, University of Natal, because they were unsure that *imbenge* was the right term for a particular basket since it was *merely the maker* who supplied this information (South African Museum 1961). Conversely, Miss Shaw and her colleagues trusted other informants to provide information about objects or authenticate their provenance, even though these sources were often geographically and culturally far removed from the items in question. Miss Shaw's assistant, for example, wrote to Gordon Gibson at The Smithsonian in America for information regarding Himba pottery in the Kaokoveld area (Lawton 1964). More illustratively, the SAM initially refused to purchase a pot from a Mrs Mason because it was not "fully authenticated" (Shaw 1967). Miss Shaw later changed her mind after receiving a reply from the deputy keeper of ethnography at the British Museum who provided her with a history of the pot that she trusted so entirely she not only accepted the donation but also intended to put it on display.

These A–K authenticating letters do not, however, appear in the computerised records. While these numbers are somewhat obsolete, their presence on the cards is revealing of the way standards and classifications are historical and constructed; without it, this sense of evolution is more obscured (Gibson and Kahn 2016). Similarly absent from the digital records is the van Warmelo-inspired numbering system for *Classification of South African Tribes*. “Zulu” items in the old SAM anthropological ethnological collection are, for example, all marked with a 13 in the top right-hand corner of the card, but this tribal group number isn’t recorded in the Logos Flow database. These numbers have been lost during the digitisation process. Their absence is explained by their being historically offensive but, again, excluding them from the records obscures steps in the classification making process. As such, the database simply classifies an item as “Zulu” but gives little insight into the fact the museum assigned this classification according to van Warmelo’s criteria. Consequently, “Zulu” can be interpreted as a natural, given category, rather than one that the Museum played a considerable role in constructing.

5.5.4. Constructing the Zulu

Zulu is a particularly problematic museum classification, as Wright and Mazel (1991) and, more recently, Hamilton et al.’s (2016) work eloquently demonstrates. Hamilton and Leibhammer credit Sandra Kloppe’s research on the British artist George French Angas as seminal in showing how an all-encompassing “quintessential” Zulu identity was developed from isolated snapshots of time and place because it suited powerful forces at that time (Hamilton and Leibhammer 2016a, 25). As they explain, the southern part of KZN, or Thukela-Mzimvubu area, was subject first to Zulu domination under Shaka and then British colonial rule under Theophilus Shepstone during the nineteenth century. The inhabitants of the region actively mobilised identities both as a means of resisting subjugation and as a means of making advantageous connections with their dominators. Following the final defeat of the Zulu kingdom at Rorke’s Drift in 1879, distinctions between the northern and southern regions of the Thukela river were increasingly blurred as the British implemented a common “native policy” (Hamilton and Leibhammer 2016a, 15). Certainly, the SAM started using this loose classification as early as 1855, when arm and leg ornaments donated by a Mr Reed were identified as Zulu (Layard 1855a) and ornaments donated by Colonel Bowker in 1880 were likewise classified

as such (South African Museum 1880). In 1936, the SAM reported new gallery installations whereby it divided display cases according to “tribal group,” including “the Bushmen and Hottentots, the Herero, Bechuana, Basuto, Ovambo, Barotse, and *in part the Zulu*” [emphasis my own] (South African Museum 1936).

This broader identification (and self-identification) as Zulu continued during the twentieth century in popular culture, specifically “white-writing,” and in such scholarly pursuits as the anthropologist Eileen Krige’s work, *Social System of the Zulus* (Hamilton and Leibhammer 2016a, 16). As Hamilton and Leibhammer point out, in a time of difficult political and economic circumstances, where access to land and other resources was limited, it also suited people to align themselves with Zulu nationalism, something I suggest Spivak might explain as “strategic essentialism” (Spivak, Landry, and MacLean 1996a). Moreover, as Hamilton and Leibhammer (2016a, 17) assert, the development of a single Zulu identity was symptomatic of a wider, more elaborate concept of tribes as the “basic building block of African society.” That museums played a role in this process is a point well made by these and other scholars (Wright and Mazel 1991, Mazel and Ritchie 1994). They highlight van Warmelo’s (1935) work as very significant in grouping people both south and north of the Thukela under a single umbrella term, albeit as the looser “Natal Nguni.” Hamilton and Leibhammer also credit Miss Shaw with adopting this in her museum cataloguing system, whereby items from this region might be classified ““Natal Nguni”: Zulu and others not differentiated.” I did find, however, from looking through the 991 catalogue cards for items classified as Natal Nguni under Miss Shaw’s system, that while almost half were designated as “Zulu,” there were others ascribed to different groups, such as Msinga, Ximba, and Vundla, suggesting she recognised the more fractured nature of Zulu identity.²³

Hamilton and Leibhammer (2016a, 26) characterise the contemporary relationship between “Zulus” and museums as still complicated. Nonetheless, museum practices have rarely been revised and scholars often continue working within the same tribal identity paradigms. Moreover, and as I discuss further in Chapter 6, this notion of a

²³ These designations are also geographical, but on the catalogue cards, they are inserted in the “Tribe” and “Group” fields according to Miss Shaw’s system.

homogenous, unified, and traditional Zulu nation not only suited the museum, but it also served, and arguably *still* serves, the interests of Zulu nationalists in KZN (Wright and Mazel 1991, Mazel and Ritchie 1994, Buthelezi 2016). Other groups prefer to avoid these “tribal” collections altogether; indeed, Hamilton and Leibhammer (2016a, 34) identify a marked distaste for anything tribal among younger intellectuals and curators that is offset by a more conservative mentality, particularly among chiefs, who perceive museums as either “rival custodial institutions” or “irrelevant” and “foreign.” Given this contentious relationship, it is easier to understand why “Zulu” collections seem so repugnant and controversial to curators in the post-Independence period.

5.5.5. Beyond the SAM

For all its evident drawbacks, Miss Shaw’s cataloguing and classification system elicited wide interest beyond the SAM. Between the 1940s and 1980s, a significant number of museums in both South and Southern Africa made enquiries about it, with several either adopting it completely or modifying it slightly to suit their collection needs. Miss Oliver at the Africana Museum, Johannesburg, expressed early interest in the system (Oliver 1940) so that, in 1984, the curator, E. B. Nagelgast, reported his museum had been using “a slightly modified version of Miss Shaw’s system for the classification of tribes in southern Africa for some time” (Nagelgast 1984). Houghton and the Transvaal Museum were also early adopters of the system and, according to Miss Shaw, started revising their catalogue system “from scratch” in the 1940s using the new card system she had outlined in the SAMAB bulletin (Shaw 1942). Some years later, in 1966, both Fiona Barbour and Richard Liversidge at the McGregor Museum in Kimberley wrote separately to Miss Shaw requesting more information about and a copy of the catalogue cards used at the SAM (Barbour 1966, Liversidge 1966). This followed an earlier request from the museum’s director in 1948 for Miss Shaw’s help in straightening out their chaotic ethnographic material (Power 1948). Subsequently, when working to promote a common standard of terminology for cataloguing purposes in the 1970s, Miss Shaw invited Barbour to be part of this project (Shaw 1970a). Also in the 1970s, Miss Cairns, the Albany Museum archaeologist, requested more information about the SAM’s ethnographic index cards since she wished to revise their Museum’s system “in view of

computerization in the future” (Cairns 1974). It is a request that Cairns’ colleague, Michael Cronin, followed up a couple of years later (Cronin 1976).

Figure 9: The Transvaal Museum catalogue card was clearly influenced by the SAM system, not least by including Object, Tribe and Locality at the top, as advised by Miss Shaw.

As late as 1980, and following Zimbabwean independence, Miss Shaw received a letter from Stella Nduku, the newly appointed curator of ethnography at the former National Museums and Monuments of Rhodesia. The letter was written on paper headed with the old institutional logo; in later correspondences, the Rhodesia part is blacked out. Nduku requested “information related to methods of collecting, accessioning, restoring and preserving ethnographic material” to which Miss Shaw responded by sending a photocopy of the system she had devised years earlier (Shaw 1980). These two institutions had a lengthy relationship since, in the previous decade, Miss Shaw had spent time training Nduku’s predecessor, Noel Robertson, in cataloguing when the director of the National Museums and Monuments of Rhodesia sent him to Cape Town for that specific purpose (Robertson 1974). Other institutions, specifically the State Museum in Windhoek and National Museum in Bloemfontein also communicated with Miss Shaw over the years regarding matters of museums catalogues and standards (Shaw 1970b). While it is beyond the scope of

this thesis to study in detail the cataloguing systems of all museums in Southern Africa, this archive does suggest that Miss Shaw's system influenced many institutions beyond the SAM and that these museums might face similarly entrenched colonial systems of knowing in their own records.

5.6. Reclassifications and Computerisation in South African museums, 1970s–present day

This flurry of interest in standardising museum cataloguing systems in the 1970s coincided with a tightening and active implementation of Bantustan policy in South Africa. Wright and Mazel (1991, 70) identify a definite shift in museum display practices in Natal during this period whereby those constructed after 1972 were “simpler, less cluttered, often imaginative in conception, and well mounted,” and subsequently communicated the museum's message more clearly. This message—that white farmers in Natal held the historical right to previously “empty” land—was forcefully reiterated in the face of perceived threats from Zulu nationalists, following the Government's formation of the Zululand Territorial Association (ZTA) in 1970 and KwaZulu in 1972. In KwaZulu, the message conveyed by museums newly opened in the 1980s was of a homogenous and unified Zulu nation rightfully committed to the KwaZulu territory and Mangosuthu Buthelezi's royal leadership (72). There is nothing in the SAM Natal Nguni collection, either in terms of items or documentation, that hints at this region's political shifts. I suggest, however, that these absences, a point to which I return in Chapter 6, and an attempt to further standardise and entrench existing classifications at this time point to South African museums' complicity in the Bantustan project, at least at an ideological level. What is more evident in the archive, however, is how interest in standardisation accompanied, and was prompted by, computerising records, a move institutions increasingly understood as inevitable.

5.6.1. Early Digitisation

As early as 1973, Dr Michael Irwin, part of the newly formed SAMA computer group, wrote to South African museums asking them to estimate their current costs of accessioning items so that his group might propose an economic argument for “computer based data banks for museum collections in southern Africa” (Irwin 1973). The SAM did not answer this letter, but a few months later, Director Küsel

wrote directly to Miss Shaw on behalf of the Computer Group of the Museum Association. Since their group had decided that a first step towards computerisation depended upon introducing a uniform terminology for each discipline, Küsel asked Shaw's permission to use her "System of cataloguing Ethnographic Material" lexicon (Küsel 1974). He also asked to use the system employed in the Transvaal Provincial Museums and incorporated museums, another of Miss Shaw's projects, and a request to which she wholeheartedly agreed (Shaw 1974). Indeed, the proposed reasons for computerising records seem to be the same as those motivating Miss Shaw's attempt to introduce a standard catalogue card system in the first place: that records could be easily shared across and between institutions. Subsequently, as these museums moved towards digitising records, this terminology and all its associated colonial baggage was transported with it.

5.6.2. New Categories and Classifications

Revisions, largely spearheaded by Davison, were made to Miss Shaw's system during this period, at least at the SAM. In the early 1970s, however, Davison still advised filing catalogue cards according to tribe (Davison 1974). This changed a decade later, when Davison and Klinghardt, the SAM's newly appointed anthropologist, started making further alterations. They made their most significant changes to the section, "Classification of South African Tribes." This was, according to Klinghardt (pers. comm., October 11, 2016), prompted by new items entering the collection that did not fit into the existing categories. At this point, the term "tribe" was also scrapped, presumably reflecting changes in socio-political attitudes at that time. Certainly, Davison's correspondence with other museums suggests a reflexive turn in the SAM anthropology department during this decade. Asked, for example, by the McGregor Museum in 1985, what the SAM was now calling "Blacks/Africans/Dark-skinned bantu-speaking negroids..." and whether museums should attempt to reach consensus on this issue, Davison replied that the SAM was moving away from organising exhibitions along ethnic lines (Barbour 1985). She acknowledged that "what people called themselves (if we know) also seems to be an important consideration" (Davison 1985), a point she reiterated in her paper "Rethinking the Practice of Ethnography" (1990) when assessing how uncritically the SAM had employed van Warmelo's untested classifications for the sake of

administrative convenience. Klinghardt (1991) likewise identified that the status of tribes in South Africa owed less to the ancestors than official classification systems.

Both Davison and Klinghardt were acutely aware of the power embodied in names, categories, and classifications. Davison (1990) explained changing the department's name from the Department of Ethnology to the Department of Ethnography as a way of distancing it from historical racial connotations and, just one year later, Klinghardt (1991) justified changing the name again to the Department of African Studies because this emphasised a historical perspective and the more complex nature of societies under study. More than that, the name change was an aspiration to "expand the scope of the department to engage in interdisciplinary projects" (Klinghardt 1991). This commitment to renaming meant they also expanded the SAM's regional and cultural classifications to include all areas of the world, drawing on categories, such as "subarctic," used by the National Geographic and the Smithsonian to make cross-referencing possible between institutions. This work culminated in the EthClassif Regions document. Yet, even in this reshuffle, where Natal Nguni was renamed Northern Nguni, Zulu remained the only distinct subclassification for this group.²⁴ A few years later, and just before the SAM merged into Iziko, Klinghardt and his colleagues decided to adopt the Chenhall classification system for documenting the collections, a system that is certainly more holistic than Miss Shaw's. This remains the basis for classifying Iziko's Social History collections today. Hisham (2018), Iziko's current social history collections manager, explained, however, that the Eurocentric Chenhall classifications are far from perfect for these collections and inappropriate for taking seriously Indigenous ontologies since, for example, powerful items are reduced to "charms" or "amulets," names that fail to capture their significance to the originating communities.

Beyond the broader departmental reclassifications and the introduction of Chenhall, there has been little engagement with the former ethnographic collections and their documentation since the end of apartheid. As discussed above, Leibhammer

²⁴ Nguni is a collective term for Bantu-speaking peoples. Further subdivided into Northern and Southern Nguni, the Northern Nguni today comprise the Swazi, Zulu, and Ndebele peoples, while the Xhosa, Thembu, Bomvana, Mpondo and Mpondomise are classified as Southern Nguni (South African History Online 2015).

identifies a wider reluctance by postindependence South African curators to engage with ethnographic collections out of anxiety and aversion (Hamilton and Leibhammer 2016a, 33). Tichmann (pers. comm., April 18, 2018) also suggests the lack of willingness to enter this “difficult terrain” as an explanation for limited engagement with these collections at Iziko in recent years. He emphasises that several good proposals were made in the early independence years around reshaping heritage, but the national government has not developed an environment conducive to implementing them. Tichmann does, however, offer a heartening argument that shifts are now happening within museums, even if these are motivated by wider demands for decolonisation of universities and curriculums, such as the Rhodes Must Fall movement. He and Hisham (pers. comm., May 22, 2018) both conceive of a decolonised museum as one that addresses these epistemological questions.

5.6.3. Digitisation and Decolonisation in the Twenty-First Century

Both Tichmann (pers. comm., April 18, 2018) and Hisham (pers. comm., May 22, 2018) suggest that digitisation might be part of the decolonising process. Digitisation is an issue on which the archive itself was very quiet between the mid-1970s and 1990s. Yet, presumably, the SAM continued working in this direction since the 1994/95 annual report states that certain collections had been completely accessioned on to a computer base to facilitate fast, accurate searches of these records (South African Museum 1995). Over the coming years, the SAM reaffirmed its commitment to digitising its records, based on an assumption that this would make knowledge more widely accessible (South African Museum 1998). Iziko continued working with this assumption that digitisation would facilitate access, so that in 2005, one of its strategic objectives was to “develop and extend computerised collections databases and make them available on the internet” (Iziko Museums of South Africa 2005). In 2010, the institution measured its success at increasing access to information by the percentage of accessions available on the Internet (Iziko Museums of South Africa 2010). By 2012/13, however, Iziko had adopted a more cautious approach to digitisation (Iziko Museums of South Africa 2013). Focusing less on numbers, the institution now expressed an interest in adapting technology to suit the local context, suggesting a growing awareness that digitisation does not automatically facilitate access (Gibson and Turner 2012). This shift followed the Department of Arts and Culture’s (DAC) publication of a draft *National Policy on*

Digitisation in 2010. What is striking about both Iziko's relatively recent annual reports and DAC's policy is that neither seriously question the very nature of the information being digitised. They do identify challenges to digitisation in South Africa, but these are largely practical, such as inconsistencies in metadata standards and an absence of guidelines for digitally capturing items (South African National Department of Arts and Culture 2010).

In terms of what is digitised at Iziko, Hisham (pers. comm., May 22, 2018) confirms that the catalogue cards still largely inform what information enters the Logos Flow database about items and collections. Since its introduction in the 1980s, the Chenhall classification number is sometimes included on the digital records but does not appear on the catalogue cards. In this instance, discrepancies between the digital and analogue records offer illuminating insights into classification work, since the absence of information on the cards demonstrates the evolutionary nature of this project. The fact that we can pinpoint when these shifts occurred highlights the historical and socio-political character of the activity, since we can trace how other events and ideas likely impacted decisions made by the SAM, which, in turn, affected the museum's knowledge-making project. Thus, being able to openly compare the records is a step towards disentangling the database black box. Unlike the Smithsonian digitisation project, however, where digitised catalogue cards are made available online alongside database records, there is no easy way yet of comparing historical SAM records side by side (Turner 2015a, Gibson and Kahn 2016).

5.7. Discussion

This chapter traced the shifting collecting and cataloguing practices of the former SAM since its inception in 1825 through to the present day. It is certainly an incomplete history since it draws on an archive whose comprehensiveness waxes and wanes through the decades. There are obvious, gaping holes in the records where documents have been lost in fires, have never been filed in the first place, or have disappeared, possibly intentionally, down untraceable paths. In other decades, the archive files are bursting at the seams with long lists of accessions, numerous appendices to annual reports, and handwritten letters so abundant with information that they almost distract from the many stories this archive doesn't tell. What this

assemblage does offer is insights into the highly constructed nature of the SAM's anthropology and ethnographic collection, both in terms of the items it comprises, and the ways knowledge has been structured and recorded about them.

That this institution was implicated in the colonial project is no surprise. What is significant is being able to trace how seemingly impartial practices, specifically cataloguing, classifying and collecting, reveal a deeply embedded colonial epistemology. Through this archival research, we can see that the catalogue card is far from an impartial source of information. Numerous decisions and compromises were made about what information should be included within it and how this information should be organised within this card. That fixing the object's "tribe" is considered so significant but recording the object's maker is not, is illustrative of colonialism's hegemony. None of these categories are neutral or natural (Bowker and Star 2000). But this work of standardising is indeed obscured by the ostensibly prosaic form of the SAM catalogue card. Its apparent humility makes it an insidious colonial success that means it survived the postapartheid transformation process largely intact. While the collection items themselves have been reclassified as social history objects and both they and their accompanying archives have relocated to the new Social History Centre, the same catalogue cards still mediate information about the items. They form the basis of information entered into the Logos Flow Digital CMS, albeit with some revisions, such as the exclusion of the category title "tribe" and including the Chenhall classification. Yet, these revisions are not highlighted as alterations to the original information and so, if we cannot compare these catalogues side by side, we lose any sense that cataloguing and classifying systems are historically constructed and, consequently, that they might even be concealing other ways of knowing.

Revealing this collection as historically constructed within a colonial framework does, then, offer the possibility of considering alternative ways of representing knowledge at the museum through these same practices. This acts as the starting point for the second stage of my fieldwork with self-identifying Zulu communities, which is the focus of my next chapter. What I am not suggesting is that a museum develop a counter collection or catalogue that rivals the current one as *the* true representation of any culture or community in post-colonial South Africa. Instead, I urge that historical museum records be historicised so that future knowledge making

projects can begin decolonising collections. To digitise the existing records may make the museum's knowledge more widely accessible but it is, as this chapter has demonstrated, a highly problematic sliver of knowledge which, if not revealed as such, risks perpetuating a very colonial understanding of our world, a situation Iziko determinedly wishes to avoid.

6. Chapter 6 – It Doesn't Fit: (Re)constructing Community Categories and Classifications in KwaZulu-Natal

Vignette: Dr Miya and the *umahlumbo*

Towards the end of my interview with Dr Miya, we moved into the isikolo, the room where a healer practices his art. The isikolo was behind a curtain hanging next to his bed. Dr Miya had already changed into his healer's outfit: a turban style headpiece with beaded dreadlocks, bright beaded sashes, two woven grass belts also decorated with colourful beads, three sticks, and an ishoba. He gave me a large shawl made of red material with King Goodwill Zwelethini's face printed on it to protect me from ancestral powers. I removed my shoes before entering the space. Half of the floor was covered with animal skins and the incansi sitting mats; plastic pots of muti (medicine) occupied the other part. I struggled to discern anything out of the shadows, especially after the dazzling KZN sunshine. Burning herbs gave off a sweet smell that left me feeling light-headed. A dried-out python skin hung from the ceiling. This was the snake Dr Miya had battled during his calling to become a healer; it was enormous. A black mamba skin also dangled from the roof, alongside a lizard pelt. Dr Miya unwrapped the two parcels in front of him. One contained "bones from the sea" and the other an umahlumbo. This powerful item arbitrates disputes and elicits truths, he told me. He spoke with the umahlumbo and it pointed directly at me. Boyzie Myeni, my interpreter, told me that Dr Miya had just asked it, "who is the guest in the house?" "It knows," he said.

6.1. Introduction

My archival research, examined in the previous chapter, revealed the very constructed nature of knowledge in the SAM collections, catalogues and classifications. The Natal Nguni collection, as part of the former anthropology and

ethnography collection, is, unsurprisingly, deeply imbued with a normalising colonial epistemology. At the same time, cracks and fissures in the documentation seemed to offer opportunities for exploring alternative narratives, both within and outside the museum's walls. Rather than trying to develop a definitive, anticolonial narrative that might make a futile attempt to fill these archival gaps, I designed my research with the intention of exploring the possibility of other stories about the Natal Nguni collection, narratives constructed by community members like Dr Miya and Myeni, who self-identify as Zulu today. This chapter explores the results of these research activities in KZN, activities conducted during five field trips to South Africa's north-eastern province. Constructing these narratives by challenging the core museum activities of collecting, cataloguing, and classifying—work that Srinivasan et al. (2009, 164 - 166) describe as taking place at the museum's permanent level—means they might become more than “add ons” that simply supplement the prevailing colonial narrative. My hope is that they can at least facilitate a sharing of curatorial authority, something colonialism vehemently denied.

What my interlocutors in KZN revealed was a vast body of knowledge and curiosity about their material culture not recorded in the SAM's catalogue or collection. While most identified, in part, as Zulu, they also boasted other affiliations that fractured the groups along regional, gender, generational, educational and economic lines. Their many differences meant a plethora of responses to the activities and questions. Despite this, there were broad areas of agreement, not least about certain items being mistakenly identified and misclassified as Zulu. Issues with language was another common theme that cut across the groups, as was a sense that vital information about items was lacking from the records, even if there was no common agreement about which information that was. There was a sense that items shouldn't be siloed from one another in collections and that they can only be understood more fully as assemblages. For many of my participants, items within these assemblages are not equally important and these hierarchies need to be acknowledged.

Of particular significance were revelations that certain items should never have entered the museum in the first place and concurrent warnings about how these must be handled and treated by those unfamiliar with the powers and potential agency of items like the *umahlumbo*. Further interactions exposed the many items people believe *should* be included in any collection purporting to represent their

communities and culture. Some of these items are more recent iterations of objects already found in the SAM collection, such as a plastic, Chinese manufactured *ukhamba* (pot), that challenge the notion of any authentic, ahistoric African culture. These other items likewise tell stories about life in KZN since the end of apartheid, histories not currently recorded that might also be easily forgotten. What all this information contributes to is an attempt at reimagining the collection of items once classified by the SAM as “Zulu,” at refiguring the language and categories we use when speaking about them so that they are more in line with the knowledge and interests of originating communities, and, so, constitute a step towards challenging the colonial narrative (Buthelezi 2016).

6.2. Fresh Categories and Classifications: Too Little, Too late—What We Should Know but Don’t

As we saw in Chapter 5, Miss Shaw’s cataloguing system prioritised certain categories of information and presented them as a total narrative. The subsequent inclusions and exclusions do not merely reflect a colonial epistemology: they produced the colonial knowledge about people and cultures in a very specific, normalising way. What my fieldwork data demonstrated is that there *are* other categories of information about items that my interlocutors considered highly significant. If nothing else, these alternative categories reinforce and reiterate how very constructed the SAM’s system was. Many of these community categories were entirely absent from Miss Shaw’s system and, so, from current Iziko records. Responses about what else, exactly, participants thought should be included varied from workshop to workshop and even person to person. The only consistency was participants’ agreement that the isiZulu object name was a very important piece of information. In some cases, I surmised which categories of information were important to community members while I acted as a participant-observer in the workshops. I drew on this data to construct my workshop feedback survey and these results supplemented my initial findings without me giving them equal weight. The table below reflects some of these research findings compared with Miss Shaw’s selected categories. It acts as a summary of the information my interlocutors in KZN would most like to know about items classified as Zulu in the museum collection, information that is either not prioritised by the current cataloguing system or is excluded altogether. The text that follows this table offers a more immersive account as to why some community members consider this information so significant, and

how it contributes towards reframing our thinking about material culture and, in turn, the people it purportedly represents.

Miss Shaw's Categories	Community Categories
Registered number of object, preceded by museum's initials	IsiZulu name of object
Tribe or group number	Colour of the item
Locality where object was obtained	How the item sounds
Name of object according to agreed terminology	Who made the item
Native name of object	Where the item was made
Photo or sketch of object	Who used the item
Description including information obtained with the specimen and pertaining to it alone	What the item is used for
How and where obtained	How the item is produced
Object's location in museum	

Table 1: Miss Shaw's item categories compared with an overview of community categories.

Presumably some of this desired information, such as “who used the item,” could once have been easily obtained but, given lengthy periods of time passing between the accessioning of the item and the present day, as well as the effectiveness of the catalogue cards in flattening item histories, retrieving this is now often near impossible. Other information, such as who made the items, can be recovered, in some cases, by scouring the archives. Items numbered 8505 and 8506, for example, classified as “Grain and Food stores” by the SAM and described on the catalogue cards as “Grain bin – model,” presented per Mrs Nxumalo, were made by students of Mr Sibisi at Mabedlane school. This last detail is not, however, included in the catalogue cards but only recovered by reading correspondence exchanged between

Miss Shaw and Mrs Nxumalo (1961). Item measurements, something for which Miss Shaw's system does provide but which, like the isiZulu name, are rarely completed on the catalogue card, could be recovered more easily by various visits to the storeroom with measuring tapes. These details about size offer important clues as to an item's function since, for example, if the dimensions of a pot are considered small, it is more likely to be an *umancishana* than an *imbiza*, meaning the item should be treated quite differently, as I discuss later in this chapter.

6.2.1. Renaming Items in isiZulu

Of the interlocutors who completed the workshop feedback questionnaire, the majority identified the item's isiZulu name as the most important piece of information to include in a catalogue card. While the sample size is admittedly small, these feedback questionnaire results, combined with the data collected during the workshops, do emphasise how significant the isiZulu item name is to these communities.

Troublesome Translations

Translating and renaming items in isiZulu is not, however, as straightforward as having a secure grasp of both English and isiZulu. Siyabonga Mzobe emphasised this succinctly when he declared about object number 1164 (Figure 10), “this is *ukhamba*. It is incorrect to say it is a clay pot. It connects us to our ancestors and to us as a Zulu nation” (Groutville Workshop, 2016).²⁵ Given the agency Mzobe and his group ascribe to the *ukhamba* in mediating these relationships, this object defies easy classification within a system such as Miss Shaw's or Chenhall's, which are based on an ontology which overlooks such object agency.

In some sense, *ukhamba* can be translated as “pot” since it is used to hold liquids and for drinking and is sometimes an item of decoration, but this term fails to encompass that it is *more* than this. Drawing a comparison with such items as the Tlingit crest hat, repatriated to the *Tlingit Dakl'aweidi* clan, Alaska, from the Smithsonian's NMNH in 2005, is helpful here. This item is a culturally and spiritually significant original *at.óow*, meaning it embodies “*Haa Shagóon*, clan ancestors, the present generation, and future generation” (Hollinger et al. 2013, 202). Classifying this item

²⁵ I held my first data collection workshop at the Luthuli Museum, Groutville, on 9 December 2016.

simply as a “hat” fails to differentiate it or capture these spiritual qualities or embodied agency by forcing it into a European way of ordering the world (Gibson and Kahn 2016, 42). Recognising this, the Smithsonian has made significant efforts to ensure they highlight these important qualities in a lengthier notes section in their online catalogue. Following repatriation, the Smithsonian now holds a 3D printed replica of the hat, an item that now has three separate online records available in the Smithsonian EMu database, Q?rius web site, and Smithsonian X-3D. Each entry extends far beyond the discrete, standard catalogue fields to include details about the repatriation process, how it was replicated, and an explanation of *at.oow*. Given the *ukhamba*’s significant and numerous functions, I suggest that, like the clan hat, it deserves similar attention and explanation in the digital environment.



Figure 10: Catalogue card and item SAM 1164, Zulu Pot

Numerous Names

Providing a single isiZulu translation for all items in the collection is, however, a potentially futile task, as the workshops demonstrate. While British colonialism and, more recently, Zulu nationalism construct a narrative of a homogenous Zulu nation, this belies the many regional differences that persist within KZN (Wright and Mazel 1991, Hamilton and Leibhammer 2016c, b). These are evident in the variety of names proffered for items by interlocutors for the same item. Item number 8832, collected in 1962 at Tugela Ferry and classified as a “belt” under Miss Shaw’s system, is a good example of this. Reflecting on this item during our workshop at Eshowe with the FHYA project team, the group explained that it had a more specific purpose than “belt” suggests, and that it has more than one name in isiZulu:

McNulty: ...what did you say the name was?
 Mbatha: *Isibhamba*.
 [...]

Xulu: And *isifociya*.
 McNulty: *Isibhamba*, yes.
 [...]

Xulu: *i-bandi*
 Ntuli: Yes, yes, yes.
 Xulu: ... after a woman has given birth she wears that. In some
 places they call it *isifociya*. *Isifociya*.
 (Eshowe FHYA Workshop, June 29, 2017)²⁶

During our Ulundi workshop, Busi Ntuli suggested this same “belt” boasted even more names:²⁷

Ntuli: *Ixhama* goes by three names: *ixhama*, *isibhamba*, *isfociya*, three names.
 (Ulundi Workshop, April 4, 2017)

The names given vary from region to region. Fieldwork in other locations might produce even more names for this “belt.” This is significant because the variations go some way towards challenging the colonial idea of a unified Zulu “tribe.” Incorporating these various names into the digital catalogue record makes visible the differences subsumed by this convenient blanket classification.

Ethical Issues

There is another ethical dimension to this renaming process. Classifications such as “pot” and “belt” have been employed too generically in the past so that items my interlocutors identify differently as *izinkhamba*, an *imbiza*, or *umancishana* are all classified as the same type under Miss Shaw’s system. This is misleading, especially if the catalogue card fails to also include the isiZulu name, as with object 1164.

These differences are important since each “pot” has a specific purpose, something Dr Miya (pers. comm., January 26, 2017) explained in his interview with me when I showed him a photograph of object 1164:

²⁶ In conjunction with the University of Cape Town’s Five Hundred Year Archive (FHYA) Project, I facilitated a workshop at the Vukani Museum, Eshowe, on 29 June 2017.

²⁷ I held my fourth data collection workshop at the KwaZulu Cultural Museum, Ulundi, on 4 April 2017.

Miya: There will be an earthenware one that is big and then there will be a small one, called '*umancishana*' (a little one), which is used for the ancestors.

The group at Eshowe further distinguished the role of *umancishana* and how this makes it culturally significant:²⁸

Xulu: *Umancishana* is used [during] ancestral celebrations. So you talk to the ancestors over it and that's why it's not supposed to be given to outsiders. Or even some of the family members. (Eshowe Workshop, 2017).

I tried to explore this point further, asking the group what would happen if an *umancishana* had entered a museum collection. The group was adamant that an *umancishana* couldn't be in a museum collection because no Zulu person would part with this item:

Gibson: ...if after you've spoken to the ancestors, if [the *umancishana*]'s taken away from the family, does something bad happen, or it's just disrespectful?

Nxumalo: There is no chance it can leave the family. It's in a special place.

Gibson: It's well looked after?

Nxumalo: In a house it is maybe [protected] by the father, or the mother of the house. Nobody else.

(Eshowe Workshop, 2017)

Given even the little I know about how the SAM procured milk pails, circumcision outfits, and human remains, in direct violation of cultural rules, as discussed in Chapter 5, I am not so certain that there is no *umancishana* in any museum collection. The absence, however, of the object's isiZulu name and the way all differences are erased by the blanket classification "pot" makes it more difficult for us to begin identifying these items in collections, items which, if they are present, certainly speak further to unethical collecting practices and an urgent need to redress these, as the Smithsonian and UBC-MOA do.

6.2.2. Colour as a Category

Alongside discussions about the isiZulu item name, colour commanded significant attention during the workshops. Undoubtedly, advances in technology make it far easier now to share high-resolution images of items than in Miss Shaw's day. Even

²⁸ I held my second data collection workshop at the Vukani Museum, Eshowe, on 3 February 2016.

the simple postcards that I shared with the group were in full colour, unlike the few black and white photographs of items that adorn some of the SAM catalogue cards. The item's colour, my interlocutors revealed, can indicate several important qualities bundled within it. Discussing the *ukhamba*, Xulu explained why colour is significant:

Xulu: With its colour, you can see that it was well burnt.
Gibson: OK, so it should be?
Xulu: Strong.

(Eshowe Workshop, 2017)

Xulu's observation is consistent with Elizabeth Perrill's (2012) research findings on Zulu pottery. She argues that sometime between Shaka's rule (1787–1828) and the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879, Zulu artists also started blackening pots through a second firing process as a mark of respect for ancestors who prefer cooler, shadier spaces. The blackened surface may eventually wear off—as perhaps is the case with item 1164 in the Iziko collection—which allows the brown colour to show through. Either way, this *ukufusa* (blackening) stage is never repeated. As Perrill points out, not all Zulu pots are either blackened or historically used for beer. Consequently, giving greater attention to this item's colour history, whether it is blackened, has been blackened, or is merely brown, for example, offers better insights into individual object biographies, a notion which itself challenges a Western idea that objects are “inert and mute” (Appadurai 2009a, 4).

Participants in Dundee likewise emphasised the significance of colour, particularly when documenting beaded items.²⁹ Bornwell Masuku posited that their colours were even more significant in the past since they effectively communicated messages in an “illiterate” society:

Masuku: In the olden days we didn't know how to write. The only way to communicate was using beads. Because beads, their colours, mean something.

(Dundee Workshop, 2017)

²⁹ I held my third data collection workshop at the Talana Museum, Dundee, on 30 March 2017.

Masuku and his cohort were quick to point out, however, that messages conveyed by colour choices and combinations are not always accessible to everyone, and intentionally so. Discussing item 11970, classified as a “medicine flask” by the SAM when it was accessioned in 1981, Masuku explained that the beads around the bottle neck indicate what is inside. Wilfred Mchunu supported this statement, explaining that the colours act as a key for the *inyanga*, who may have several containers like this, each filled with different kinds of *muti* (Dundee workshop, March 30, 2017). But, as Masuku explained, this knowledge would often be unique to that *inyanga*:

Gibson: So, you’d have to understand that language [of colours] to understand that?

Masuku: Yes.

(Dundee Workshop, 2017)

While this might mean it seems pointless to emphasise an item’s colour in the records if we don’t all have the skills to interpret it, I argue that recognising our own limitations is actually the first step towards taking seriously other ontologies. These participants understood that someone in their wider community *does* possess the knowledge to interpret messages that are potentially being communicated by bead colours. Documenting this feature is thus understandably more important to these originating communities than it was to colonial officials who, not being versed in this knowledge system, failed to prioritise the recording of colour in the same way “tribe” or “object number” were. Being able to reorganise how information is prioritised is, then, an incremental challenge to a colonial ontology.

6.2.3. Sound Representations

Similarly, sound, a quality entirely absent from Miss Shaw’s system, drew attention from the Eshowe group while studying the *ukhamba* picture:

Mbatha: And when it’s ready, it makes a certain noise. Yes, a certain noise.

Xulu: When you buy it, you test it. You do this [hitting side of her mug]. There’s a certain sound that tells you this is quality.

(Eshowe Workshop, 2017)

Speaking about other items that might be included in a museum collection, Xulu hinted once again that including sound recordings would provide a more holistic understanding of such ceremonial items as drums:

Xulu: You know when they play like this and do the [makes whooo, whooo sound and mimics pulling threads]. They make a hole and put this wet skin and they do this and they make a nice, different sound. (Eshowe Workshop, 2017)

It is, admittedly, very difficult to convey this information through a two-dimensional catalogue card. That this aspect was overlooked by Miss Shaw's system is, however, also indicative of a broader European preoccupation with privileging sight, which Fabian (1983) terms the "rhetoric of vision" and sees as yet another device used by anthropologists to deny coevalness. Bennett (2006) expounds further on how privileging sight means Western museum exhibitions are arranged and interpreted in a particular way, an argument that this fieldwork data suggests might be expanded further to include the ways items are documented as well as displayed. As with colour, new technologies *do* make it possible to embed a high-quality sound recording in a digital catalogue record. That this is not common practice or a standard feature in museum databases is, I suggest, evidence of a lingering "rhetoric of vision" in the postcolonial period. Indeed, as Sarah Kenderdine (2018) points out, we are constrained in what we represent by the very visual language of the database. But it does seem that digital catalogue records can, potentially, better accommodate information about items that the community prioritises, rather than meeting just the needs of the old SAM. Importantly, incorporating other sensory details also challenges a colonial privileging of sight that fundamentally affected both the kinds of evidence collected and communicated, and, consequently, the narrative they seemed to support.

6.2.4. Locating the Artist

Interestingly, participants did not place as much emphasis on knowing the name of the individual who made the item as they did on the maker's gender. During the Eshowe workshop, for example, Nxumalo explained that, "for instance with the *isikhetho*, it's something that's made by women in general, not by specific people" (February 3, 2017). Likewise, when I asked Dr Miya (pers. comm., Jan 26, 2017) if he knew who made his *umancishana*, Myeni interpreted his response simply as "there were mothers who came from Msinga. They were selling those." Nxumalo hinted at why this detail about gender might be so important when stating that, "because of joblessness," men are now "also involving themselves in such things" as

making traditional items “that were done by women previously” (Eshowe Workshop, February 3, 2017). Knowing the maker’s gender alongside the dates of creation and collection would, arguably, allow us to better understand the timings of these socioeconomic shifts. Once again, this historicises the item, placing it, and the people producing it, in a particular historical context so that they are no longer suspended out of time.

6.2.5. Where the Item Was Made:

Information about where the item was collected is sometimes included in the catalogue card. However, as Dr Miya’s comment about the *umancishana* suggests, people sometimes travel significant distances to sell their artworks. This journey is an important stage in the object’s biography. As these objects move out of their immediate production environment and through the cycles of exchange, Appadurai (2009a, 43) recognises that “large gaps of knowledge” appear. He argues that the system of circulation and exchange giving rise to these knowledge gaps ensures a situation whereby searching for reliable information is a preoccupation for an institution, yet it remains exceedingly difficult to gain reliable information about people and things. Whereas Miss Shaw’s cataloguing system presents object provenance knowledge in a complete form, I argue that including such details as where the item was made, as well as where it was collected, make it possible for us to think of these cards as incomplete records, as testimonies to the gaps of knowledge Appadurai proposes, an idea that again provides space for other narratives.

6.2.6. What’s the Use?

The person who used the item, participants argued, was particularly important when dealing with items such as 9452, classified by the SAM as a “club,” and 5982, classified as a “stick” by the museum:

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Gibson: | You want to know more information [about item 5982].
What sort of information do you want? |
| Röhrs: | We want the figure behind who is holding this.
(Dundee Workshop, 2017) |
| Xulu: | Do you know Mr Buthelezi? |
| Gibson: | Yes, I know Mr Buthelezi. Not personally, but yes. |
| Xulu: | OK, so he carries that [pointing at object 9452]. That’s for respectable men. |

Nxumalo: Prominent, respectable men [...] It is not carried by everybody.

(Eshowe Workshop, 2017)

As these conversations at Eshowe and Dundee demonstrated, certain items designate authority and so are not used by just anyone. Given this knowledge, we can assume that the item once belonged—or was intended to belong—to a person of significance within the community, a detail that enriches that object’s biography and lifts it out of a more generic timeless interpretation of so-called traditional objects.

6.2.7. What the Item is Used For:

Miss Shaw was insistent that her catalogue cards did not include more general information about items that might be found in secondary literature. Arguably, the item’s use falls under this category since it is rarely specific to individual items. However, the absence of isiZulu names for many of the items means it is often more difficult to determine its intended use since such broad categories as “pot” and “belt,” as discussed above, conceal the item’s more specific purpose. An *isifociya*, for example, is not merely a decorative waist adornment, it plays a significant role in a mother’s recovery after giving birth. In almost every instance of asking groups to tell me something about the item in the photograph, the first information they provided, other than its isiZulu name, was about its use. Moreover, during the workshop feedback survey, nine people identified this information category as very important when describing an item. As such, I suggest that this information should be more readily available and, if it is not stated directly on the catalogue card, obvious links to further information should be given. Hisham (pers. comm., May 22, 2018), drawing on her recent work with a visiting Bushmen group at Iziko, also makes the important point that objects were often used for more than one purpose. She recounted how one of the Bushmen visitors had laughed when he saw a tortoise shell item classified as a San “toilet box” in the SAM records. He explained that it’s a container, just something to carry things in, whether it’s medicines, cosmetics, or food; that its form doesn’t mean “this is what it is” and it can’t be used for anything else. Forcing items into siloed and singular classifications, Hisham cautions, reflects a very colonial way of interpreting cultures, the horrifying consequences of which, especially when things don’t fit exactly, are most evident in the implementation of apartheid race classifications.

6.2.8. How Is It Made?

During our Dundee workshop, Norman Leveridg shared his view on the potential benefits technology brings to museums to enhance the item record:

Leveridg: This is where digitisation and new tech is nice because you have a chance to photograph the product at the collecting site and you can even videotape the ceremony and then attach all that information to the record to make it more [...] alive.
(Dundee Workshop, 2017)

Especially during the Eshowe and Ulundi meetings, my interlocutors were certainly keen to provide meticulous descriptions about how the items were made. Nxumalo shared that she had direct experience making an *ukhamba* and Xulu vividly remembered her grandmother creating *izinkhamba* (Eshowe workshop, February 3, 2017). Their descriptions were rich in detail. It became clear that the process is intensely place based, that the item embodies deep knowledge about the landscape from which, and in which, it is formed and that these women considered this aspect as important as knowing what shape these vessels should ultimately take:

Nxumalo: The process starts from when you collect the clay from the river bed. And then removing the stones, and then making it into a smooth putty. Then you start making shapes like spaghetti. Then you make the base; this determines the shape. As you see [pointing to *izinkhama* on display] they are not all the same shape.
(Eshowe Workshop, 2017)

Likewise, the *isikhetho*, classified as a “beer strainer” under Miss Shaw’s system, speaks to the geography and seasons of that region:

Gibson: It’s a special process. So you can only harvest [the grass] at certain times of the year? You pick it at certain times of the year and then dry it?
Nxumalo: And make this *isikhetho* too.
Gibson: OK, what times of the year?
Mbatha: It depends on the place.
Nxumalo: In other places, it just grows.
Shange: Near water and swamp areas.
[...]
Nxumalo: And some areas are protected, you are not allowed to go and cut grass in those areas.

Recording such intangible knowledge is not only significant because the community places value on it, but also because, as further discussions revealed, recent developments such as mass-produced, Chinese manufactured replicas of these items perceivably undermine the economic viability of these local processes and threaten their extinction. Embedding video clips of the local creation processes in a digital catalogue does, then, seem to offer an opportunity to preserve knowledge that the older generation values so highly. Yet, there are potential ethical issues with capturing production in this way, as Bongani Ndhlovu, Executive Director: Core Functions at Iziko, explained (pers. comm., April 10, 2017). While in the field in KZN, his research team would video such processes as making the *ukhamba* from scratch. Thereafter, the community might invite the researchers to record how the item was used in a ceremony. However, Ndhlovu often had reservations about filming something so sensitive: on the one hand, members of the community were giving express permission by actively inviting the team in, but on the other hand Ndhlovu questions whether those community members have the right to grant permissions on behalf of the wider community.

6.3. New Relationships: Alternative Assemblages, Hierarchies, and Power

6.3.1. Assemblages and Relational Objects

Of all the information categories already included on the paper cards, “object type” determines how they are physically ordered within the Iziko Social History Centre filing cabinets. The Natal Nguni catalogue cards are still organised alphabetically according to Miss Shaw’s system so that “bags” are separated from “baskets” and from “breastcloths” by neatly-labelled, cardboard dividers. This arrangement makes it easier to draw relationships between objects sharing this same classification. Indeed, we know that Miss Shaw certainly focussed her research according to object type with pottery and basketry occupying her attention for numerous years. Interestingly, my interlocutors seemed to draw different kinds of relationships between items whereby they conceive of assemblages of objects drawn together instead through ceremonial and other uses.

Specifically, participants drew connections between items used in beer drinking ceremonies which are, as Perrill (2012) emphasises, a highly significant part of Zulu belief systems. As discussed above, the *umancishana* plays a crucial role in mediating relations with the ancestors, but it does so in the company of other items. The significance of these items can only really be understood if they are considered as part of an assemblage in which they are intrinsically connected to other items and agencies. Speaking about the *isikhetho* (SAM item number 8398), for example, Nxumalo explained that this item, as well as a stirrer and cover, must be present during these beer-drinking ceremonies: “When you serve beer, you must have this item” (Eshowe Workshop, February 3, 2017).

Rodney Harrison et al. (2013) draw on Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s theories of assemblages, as well as on archaeological concepts, to explain connections between museum items that sometimes depend on broader ontologies. Their ideas demand that we think differently about relationships between things and the agencies embodied within them, as Nxumalo implies. Taking these seriously is another way of challenging a deep-rooted colonial ontology in museum collections. The current paper-based catalogue card arrangement does not easily facilitate these other connections, but, I suggest, a digital database might address this situation by embedding links that connect records to produce alternative digital assemblages. Suddenly, this opens possibilities for arranging collections differently and in ways that more closely resemble how originating communities might determine relationships between things. Indeed, Geismar (2012) persuasively argues that the strength of digital technologies lies in their ability to expose and reveal a form of sociality that museums historically obscured in terms of how collections were compiled, organised, and displayed. The paradox is that digital encoding of the collections can reveal these invisibilities and so potentially give occasion to reorganise both display and access, which, Geismar argues, seriously challenges the museum’s authority. There is, however, a concurrent risk that digitisation leads to content being “atomized” and treated as data (Borgman 2015, 50). Tanner (2006) and Borgman (2015) both suggest that this atomisation permits opportunities to aggregate and disaggregate knowledge in new ways, but caution that it also means neglecting the content’s original form and context, something that allows us to overlook how the data was originally curated as an “evidentiary record” (Borgman

2015, 53). In seeking to decolonise the collection, it is important that these original museum connections are still visible in the digital domain, alongside other assemblages. Both attest to a collection's always highly constructed nature and so, in revealing these inherent biases, expose them as complex and fragile evidence, regardless of purpose.

6.3.2. Hierarchies of objects and information

While these alternative networks and assemblages of items might enhance the status of objects included within them, my data does not suggest that community members considered all items equally important. As became obvious in my archival research, certain communities historically considered some items more culturally significant than others. Regardless of the questionable reasons collectors gave for their difficulties procuring certain objects, such as the milk pails and circumcision outfits discussed in the previous chapter, there is certainly evidence that members of these Zulu communities were more willing to part with some items than others. This notion was reinforced during both workshops and interviews, particularly when discussing Zulu "pots." At Dundee, after studying the *ukhamba* image, Gustav Röhrs declared that, "this thing here, this defines the Zulu. It defines the Zulu" (Dundee Workshop, March 30, 2017). In Groutville, there was general agreement with this sentiment when Mzobe expressed the *ukhamba*'s wider significance:

Mzobe: It connects us to our ancestors and to us as a Zulu nation. A house is not considered full, complete, if this is not there.
(Groutville Workshop, 2016)

As I have also discussed above, the group at Eshowe explained that the *umancishana* is so culturally significant it should never leave the family. *Izinkhamba* also retain a special significance, since they too are integral to the beer drinking ceremony, but it seems they have slightly more freedom of movement. According to Nxumalo and the group at Eshowe, however, *izikhetho* (beer stirrers) are not protected so fiercely, despite being part of this same assemblage:

Gibson: So if *isikhetho* went outside the house, that would be ok?
Nxumalo: Then it doesn't matter.
Gibson: It doesn't matter? OK?
Mbatha: It's, it's a sieve in other words.

Gibson: So it's not special in the way the *ukhamba* is?
Nxumalo & Mbatha: No.

(Eshowe Workshop, 2017)

What these conversations suggest, despite the small sample size, is that some items *are* more significant than others to these communities. Moreover, incorporating alternative hierarchies that challenge a colonial ordering effectively highlights the constructed nature of *all* hierarchies, thus undermining any sense that decisions made by Miss Shaw and her colleagues, or other communities, were either natural or objective. I do suspect that an item's perceived place in any hierarchy might vary from region to region, as the isiZulu names do, but accommodating this more subjective information in a catalogue record might better reflect an originating community's relationship with their material culture. Once again, any such differences are important because they also undermine the colonial construct of a homogenous Zulu tribe.

6.3.3. Powerful Objects and Secret Knowledge

There are, my interlocutors suggest, other items in the Iziko collection that are so significant they either shouldn't be there in the first place, or they should be treated very differently once a museum is aware of them. These are objects that the communities consider powerful, primarily for the roles they play in mediating relations with the ancestors. The *umahlumbo* and *umancishana* are both examples of such powerful items where current, "Eurocentric" classification schemes fail to capture these more esoteric qualities (Hisham, pers. comm., May 22, 2018). Several interlocutors identified the "medicine flask" (SAM item 11970) as potentially powerful. Leveridg, Dundee, succinctly explained its power as depending on more than its contents since, "not only could the medicine inside be dangerous, so could the spiritual connection to it" (Dundee Workshop, 2017). When I showed Dr Miya (pers. comm., January 26, 2017), a self-identified Zulu healer, the pictures of the Iziko items, he pointed to the medicine flask and explained that he also has one that he uses to store "*umuti*," his medicine. He withdrew to his *isikolo* (healing room) and returned with his own version, a container he claimed is so powerful he can use it to "make a thunderstorm." He was quick to emphasise that the item is so powerful that the container should not be handled by just anyone:

Miya: This medicine container, I've got one. We store *umuti* in it. This *muti* here is talking.

Gibson: Is talking?
 Miya: Yah.
 Gibson: OK.
 Miya: No-one is allowed to touch it without my permission. But I can hold it and give them permission.

The *umahlumbo* that I introduced in my opening vignette is similarly powerful as an arbitrator of disputes. Before creating this item, the healer must speak with the tree from which they will produce it about their intentions. The healer then sacrifices and buries a white chicken beneath the tree. Myeni explained that, “If you stole something but say you didn’t do it, then this *umahlumbo* will point straight at you, because it knows you did it. That’s how powerful it is.” When I asked Dr Miya if this power resides only with the *umahlumbo*, or with the person holding it, Dr Miya replied that it also needs his power to work. The ability to use such an item, Miya and Myeni explained, is vested in the healer by the ancestors. A little later, I questioned Myeni about what could happen if such items were handled without permission. He told me that “something might go wrong in your head. You might go mad, or die if you are too weak.” Both Myeni and Miya agreed that the medicine flask should not be touched without the owner’s consent, making me somewhat anxious about how blasé I was while handling it in the Iziko stores. That the SAM records do not identify or include handling instructions for these powerful items is, again, indicative of a colonial ontology that denies agency to nonhuman actors.

The SAM was not the only museum to collect such powerful items. When discussing this issue with Ndhlovu (pers. comm., April 10, 2017), he shared a story about a female staff member at the Department of Arts and Culture who struggled for many years to fall pregnant. Out of desperation she touched a fertility item held in the museum where she worked and soon after became pregnant. The Smithsonian also holds potentially powerful Zulu items, including a “Witch Doctor’s Charm” (item no. E412795) and a “Witch Doctor’s kit” (item no. E412796). According to the accession file, these were “taken from a witch doctor killed by donor [Fred Pinnick] in the Zulu war, 1905, Mome Gorge.” Interestingly, this provenance detail was not copied from the Smithsonian’s paper catalogue card to the digital record, although a copy of the paper version can be viewed in the online record. While researching these items, Mkhuluwe Cele (email message to author, November 13, 2015), an

expert in traditional South African medicines based in KZN confirmed that this was likely a medicine bag belonging to an *inyanga*. He and Steve Kotze from Durban Local History Museums believe the bag is made from the skin of an *uxamu* (water monitor). Cele suggests that the choice of *uxamu* skin reflects the personal preference of the owner since medicine bags aren't conventionally made from this material. Given the *uxamu*'s natural strength and single-mindedness of purpose, people did eat parts of it to ingest its strength. As such, parts of the *uxamu* are a fairly common ingredient in *intelezi* (war medicine). Cele says the pouch would increase the strength of the medicines inside because it was made from *uxamu* skin, highlighting again an understanding that agency is dispersed, rather than resting only with human actors (Steve Kotze, email message to author, November 10, 2015).

It would be too easy to dismiss these interlocutors' concerns about powerful items as grounded purely in superstition. As I discussed in my literature review, object agency is the subject of significant studies, particularly in anthropology (Strathern 1988, Gell 1998, Latour 1999, K  chler 2002, Kreps 2003, Were 2014, Watts 2013, Todd 2014a). Myeni and Miya's interpretation of where power lies recalls Latour's (1999) work on purification, which dismantles the subject-object dichotomy so central to both modernist realist and postmodernist relativist epistemologies. Rejecting a drive to distinguish clearly between the world of agency and that of natural determinism, Latour refers instead to humans and non-humans, exploring the way each exerts agency in relationship with the other to articulate a new proposition or "hybrid actor" that blurs the boundary between them (180). Considered as such a proposition, neither healer nor *umahlumbo* are fixed as either subject or object; responsibility for the outcome is shared. Subsequently, Latour concludes that we must recognise that artefacts are not extra to social relations but integral to them, a point many current cataloguing and classification systems fail to elucidate.

Taking alternative ideas about object agency seriously can have dramatic implications for museums. This is certainly evident at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian Cultural Resources Center (NMAI-CRC) in Suitland, Maryland, where more than 800,000 artefacts are stored, many of which have spiritual significance. Recognising these items as living means the building is architecturally designed to integrate museum curatorial concerns with those of

Native custodians. Items in the NMAI-CRC thus enjoy space to breathe in a “safe, comfortable home” fashioned “to protect the objects and their spirits” (Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian 2005). Likewise, the Tlingit clan crest hat discussed above is stored according to Tlingit guidelines as well as museum best conservation practices (Hollinger et al. 2013).

These and other actions have gone some way towards ameliorating relations between the Smithsonian and Native communities. As Eric Hollinger, Repatriation Officer at the Smithsonian NMAI, points out, it is now rare that communities come to the Smithsonian to discuss repatriation issues and then want no further relationship with the museum (Hollinger, pers. comm., October 22, 2015). In my conversation with Dr Miya, he also said that he was not opposed to museums keeping Zulu “treasures,” as it might mean they are available for future generations so that they can learn more about their culture. Xulu, while initially agitating for the return of all Zulu items from museums to their originating communities, later expressed reservations that “it won’t work to bring all those objects from overseas until the...real custodians that can see the value of these objects” (Eshowe Workshop, February 3, 2017).

Regardless of their views on repatriation and who should ultimately have custody of them, there was a shared feeling that museums are currently ignorant about how to care for items considered powerful by Zulu communities and that this *was* a matter of immediate concern. Remedying this situation demands taking alternative object ontologies seriously in ways that fundamentally change not only how museums classify and catalogue these items but also how they house and handle them; Dr Miya, for example, advocates storing medicine containers in bowls of oil to protect against their power. Actions such as these, I argue, are not merely a step towards building trust between museums and communities but reflect a genuine commitment to decolonising the museum’s core collections management and conservation activities. These are certainly less visible interventions than exciting exhibitions but, as Lampland and Star (2009b) and Buthelezi (McKaiser, Wright, and Buthelezi 2017) point out, the most profound changes often come out of the more boring and painstaking types of work.

6.4. Misidentified: “This isn’t Zulu!” —Challenging Colonial Classifications

So far, this chapter has focussed on reimagining items that my interlocutors broadly accepted as Zulu belongings. Two items, the “Game” and “Doll,” however, gave them cause to challenge even this classification. The SAM accessioned the “Zulu Game” in 1948, along with other items from the Dunn Collection (Figures 11 and 12). The same Mr Dunn, who so crudely described how he collected the Zulu sweatscraper from a friend who had shot and killed the owner, explained the “Game” as, a "Puzzle. Kaffir. The sticks have to be taken off the string. Zululand" (Dunn 1871–1886). Even without this accompanying information, the reactions to this photograph at both the Groutville and Eshowe workshops were unanimous: this item was not Zulu. Speaking on behalf of his group in Groutville, Mzobe shared that, “we have not seen something like this. It's definitely not South African” (Groutville Workshop, 2016). Similarly, when I showed the group in Eshowe the same item a couple of months later, participant Xulu declared, “It’s not Zulu” and Ntuli supported her assessment by explaining, “...it has nothing to do with the Zulus. We don’t see things like this” (Eshowe Workshop, February 3, 2017).



Figure 11: "Puzzle" South African Museum Item 6732

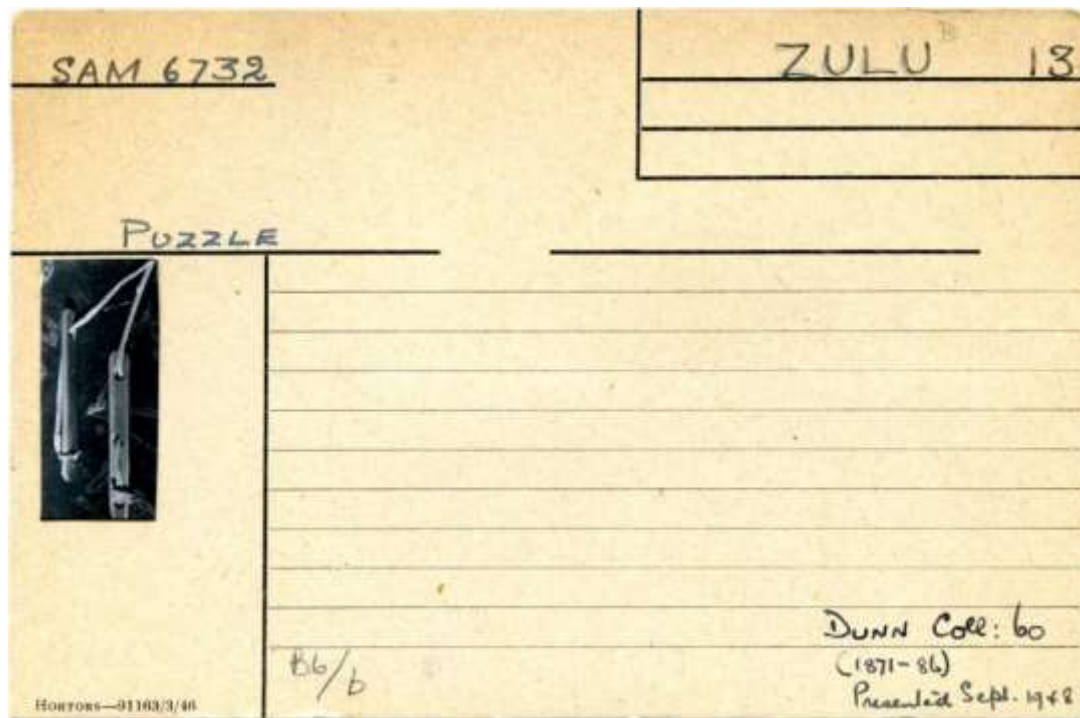


Figure 12: Catalogue card for SAM 6732, Zulu Puzzle

The Zulu “Doll” (Figure 13), accessioned by the SAM in 1905, elicited similar questions about provenance. The group in Groutville expressed reservations about its classification, agreeing that it isn’t a “normal Zulu doll” and that most dolls made at this time already looked like the Zulu dolls seen more commonly today. At Ulundi, Bongiwe Dube also hesitated to identify this item as Zulu. Speaking on behalf of her group, she shared that, “it doesn’t look like it’s from the Zulus...I’m not sure; I don’t think it’s Zulu” (Ulundi Workshop, 2017). Mchunu and his colleagues were more forthright at challenging this classification during our workshop in Dundee:

- Mchunu: ... from our observation we realise that it is not an original.
 Gibson: Not an original?
 Mchunu: Zulu doll, or depicting any of our Zulu cultural background. It maybe comes from Namibia or the Masai of Kenya.
 Gibson: Ok, so the colours, the shape, those all indicate to you that it’s not Zulu, it’s something foreign?
 Mchunu: Ja.

(Dundee Workshop, March 30, 2017)

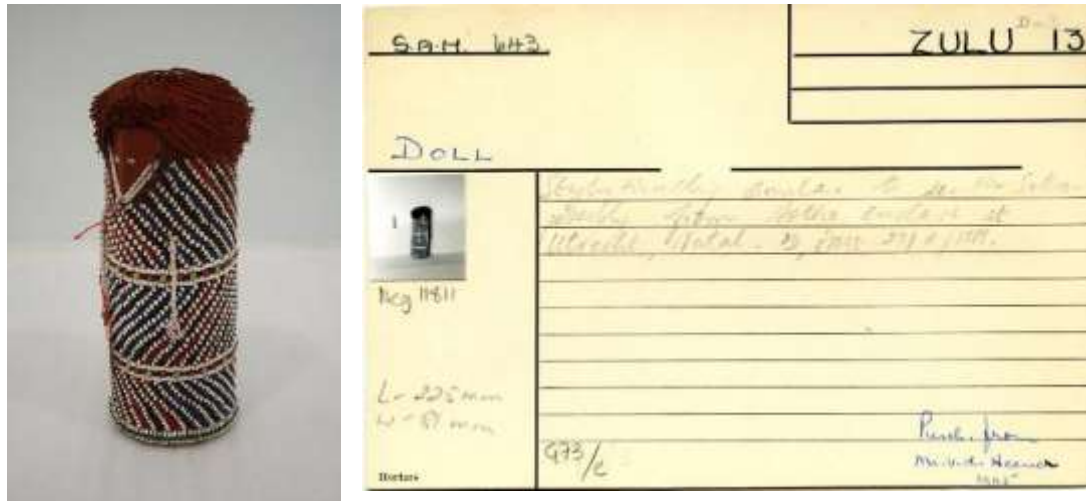


Figure 13: Item and catalogue card for SAM 643, Zulu Doll

6.4.1. Unger Sibasio, the Smithsonian “Zulu”

The SAM is certainly not the only institution to have potentially misidentified an item as Zulu. During my pre-doctoral research fellowship at the Smithsonian NMNH I encountered a small number of items identified as from “Zululand, South Africa” and connected by their listed donor, Unger Sibasio. Entering the Smithsonian in 1892 as accession number 26185, they include wax cylinder recordings, a “musical bow” purchased from the “maker and player” Unger Sibasio of the Sauanchio tribe, and photographs of Sibasio playing the bow. The musical bow is still part of the Smithsonian NMNH collection as object no. E95201. Collected by S P Langley, Secretary of the Smithsonian, it is one of the oldest items in the NMNH’s South African collection and is the only item listed as being given by an “Indigenous” South African, rather than someone of European descent. Langley was also responsible for organising the wax cylinder phonograph recording through the Columbia Phonograph Company of Washington, D.C., and for photographing Sibasio playing the instrument. These photographs are now held in the Smithsonian’s National Anthropological Archives (NAA) and the wax cylinders are at the Library of Congress. The original accessions register suggests that three wax cylinders were received containing two Zulu love songs and a war song, all recorded in October 1892. However, the American Folklife Center’s introduction and inventory to The Federal Cylinder Project suggests there were four cylinders. These were misidentified as “Eskimo music recorded by H W Krieger” and transferred here from the National Archives in 1948. This entry was later “corrected” back to Zulu.

While in D.C., I visited the Library of Congress to listen to the footage on these wax cylinders. Although the recordings are marred by static, the tune is still audible, as is some of the original voice recording transcribed below:

Tape 29, Cut no. 4:

11m 44s: “The following Zulu love song with an accompaniment on a Zulu musical instrument was made for the [inaudible] going by the name of [inaudible] recorded by the Columbia Phonograph Company on October 6 [or 5] 1892.”

Tape 29, Cut no. 5:

16m 25s: “[inaudible] Zulu warrior [inaudible]”

If these recordings were of Zulu songs, they would have been among the earliest sound recordings of Zulu music anywhere on record. This argument was sufficiently persuasive that Judith Gray, Folklife Specialist at the Library of Congress’s The American Folklife Center, facilitated digitising the recordings. I was then able to share these recordings with experts in South Africa. Vivienne Garside from the Vukani Museum collected and compiled the various responses and, based on opinions given by native or fluent Zulu speakers all working within the cultural heritage field, concluded that “the result is pretty unanimous - this gentleman and his bow are not Zulu and probably not African” (email message to author, January 11, 2016).

The Smithsonian has since amended its online catalogue to demonstrate it is no longer certain about the bow’s Zulu assignation (Figure 14). What remains mysterious, however, is why the Smithsonian and SAM classified these messy provenance items as Zulu in the first place, if indeed they are *not* Zulu.








	<h2>Musical Bow</h2> <p>DONOR NAME: Unger Sibasio</p> <p>CULTURE: Zulu (Not certain) Black South African</p> <p>OBJECT TYPE: Musical Bow</p> <p>PLACE: South Africa, Africa</p> <p>ACCESSION DATE: 1892-Sep-12</p> <p>SPECIMEN COUNT: 1</p> <p>RECORD LAST MODIFIED: 1 Mar 2017</p> <p>TOPIC: Ethnology</p> <p>ACCESSION NUMBER: 026185</p> <p>USNM NUMBER: E95201A-0</p> <p>SEE MORE ITEMS IN: Anthropology</p> <p>DATA SOURCE: NMNH - Anthropology Dept.</p>
<p> Media</p> <p> Record Link</p> <p> Print</p> <p> View</p> <p> Share</p> <p> Contact Info</p>	

Figure 14: Searchable online catalogue record for Musical Bow. Department of Anthropology, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution (E95201A-0).³⁰

Hamilton and Leibhammer (2016a) offer a plausible explanation for the proliferation of items classified by museums as Zulu in the late nineteenth century. They argue that following the final defeat of the Zulu kingdom at Rorke's Drift in 1879, distinctions between the northern and southern regions of the Thukela river were increasingly blurred when the British implemented a common "native policy" (15). Moreover, people now saw it as beneficial to identify with Zulu nationalism when resources became more limited. McNulty (pers. comm., July 7, 2017) argues that in the nineteenth century, Zulu became almost synonymous with black African, which might also explain why the Smithsonian classified these items that way. Another possible explanation is that the Smithsonian needed "African" material for the World's Columbian Exposition, also known as the Chicago World's Fair, for which dedication ceremonies were held in October 1892, just days after the wax cylinder recordings were made. Indeed, in Langley's Bureau of Ethnology Report for the Year ending 30 June 1892, he wrote that "another feature" of the year's work was collecting "ethnologic objects for the exhibit at the World's Columbian Exposition" (Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 7300, Samuel P. Langley Papers,

³⁰ Available at:
<http://collections.si.edu/search/results.htm?q=+E95201&image.x=15&image.y=9>

1834-1906). The following year, Langley expressed frustration that funding from Congress meant very limited means for improving the collections by purchase (Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 7300, Samuel P. Langley Papers, 1834-1906). Is it possible that Sibasio and his musical bow were substitutes for “genuine” Zulu items that could not be purchased for the World Fair? Either way, once this classification was cemented as fact by its entry in the museum records, it remained unchallenged.

6.4.2. Contradictory Classifications and Factoids

During our Dundee workshop, Leveridge, the researcher at Talana Museum, offered another explanation for cultural misclassifications. After examining the picture of the doll, which he also concluded was not Zulu, he suggested that even if it wasn’t made there, it might have been collected in Zululand by someone who, at some point, resided in Zululand, so that the place of collection and culture were mistakenly conflated:

Leveridge: ...this thing could’ve been collected in Zululand. Because, remember, missionaries who travelled throughout Africa, they could’ve brought that down with them and then when they donated their collections, [they say] let’s just say the whole lot came from Zululand, but there’s actually this mix of other dolls. (Dundee Workshop, 2017)

Working also with the idea of movement and migration, Ndhlovu (pers. comm., April 10, 2017) cautioned against dismissing the doll’s cultural classification too quickly. His lengthy experience collecting and researching in KZN alerted him to just how frequently people exchanged ideas, styles, and techniques and incorporated them into their own. Movement between people in this area has been going on for so long, he argues, that it is difficult to identify something as “authentic” or “pure” Zulu, despite misguided colonial attempts to do exactly that. Certainly, these responses demand that we better interrogate objects’ provenance so that information left unchecked for decades, for various historical and political reasons, does not pass so easily into digital records where it reiterates possible mistakes as truths.

John Bradley, Howard Short, and Michele Pasin’s (2005, 2015) notion and use of factoids is a useful framework for thinking about how we might better handle these

varying (mis)classifications and messy provenances in a digital environment. The term, first coined in 1973 by Norman Mailer to denote “facts which had no existence before appearing in a magazine or newspaper,” still holds a popularly negative connotation, being defined by the *OED* as “an item of unreliable information that is reported and repeated so often that it becomes accepted as fact” (Pasin and Bradley 2015, 89). Bradley et al. work with a more nuanced understanding, however, that factoids, in prosopography terms, record an assertion by a particular source at a particular time and place and so still represent an act of interpretation. As such, factoids frequently contradict one another. Within this paradigm, we can consider both the catalogue cards *and* descendent community interpretations as factoids, both interpretations that require serious consideration when constructing new narratives. Whereas an analogue prosopography, just like the paper catalogue card, tends to produce a polished narrative that obscures various historical assumptions and simplifications, the highly structured, factoid-centric databases constructed for Bradley et al.’s three prosopography projects on the Byzantine world, Anglo-Saxon England, and clergy of the Church of England presents the many, often-contradictory factoids side-by-side, something Bradley and Short argue makes visible the act of interpretation, ensuring the user better recognises the “factoid-like nature of data” (2005, 19). Viewing provenance statements by both the SAM and community members as factoids offers a way to challenge the museum’s historic authority, while also asking the user to consider the intricacies and pitfalls associated with any act of interpretation. It is a way of representing provenance that is more nuanced than an absolute counter narrative.

6.4.3. Subsuming the Silos

The interlocutors’ responses also raise important questions about cultural silos of the sort employed by Miss Shaw and van Warmelo. In line with apartheid thinking, their classifications meant people and their material culture could belong to only one well-defined and distinct group. At Eshowe, Nxumalo also challenged the SAM’s decision to classify the *ukhamba* as a specifically Zulu pot, arguing that, “it’s not only for the Zulu. This is African because as far as Egypt you find them. This one, you find it in the Ndebele,” another South African ethnic group (Eshowe Workshop, February 3, 2017). If we are looking to decolonise this system of classification in the digital age, we undoubtedly need to challenge the colonial assumption, embodied in

the SAM catalogue cards, that items can be representative of a single culture rather than reflective of myriad influences and exchanges of ideas particular to that time.

Yet, by categorically rejecting certain items as “not Zulu,” these results also highlight a commonly held notion that there *is* a Zulu culture to which these objects do *not* belong. Indeed, as discussed below, the same interlocutors confidently asserted that other items in the SAM collection were most definitely Zulu and that they are proud of this fact. While challenging these colonial cultural classifications is undoubtedly important, I recognise that it is possible to over-academise this issue to the point of undermining people’s self-identities. It is not my intention to suggest my interlocutors incorrectly imagine and associate with a Zulu identity, especially given South Africa’s history, whereby the ability to openly self-identify with one or multiple groups is a relatively new phenomenon. It is an issue deeply entwined with Indigenous identity politics, something Harris et al. (2013) argue needs more nuanced attention globally. I believe it is important to bear this in mind so that decolonisation can be conducted more respectfully for those most affected by the process.

6.4.4. The Resurgence of “Zulu”

Nevertheless, we should remain prudent about the reasons some groups still advocate for the idea of a broader, all-encompassing Zulu culture of the kind constructed during European colonialism. Kotze (pers. comm., September 14, 2017) suggests the last decade has witnessed a resurgence of Zulu nationalism that has significantly influenced museums in the KZN province. He argues that museums persist with a narrative that reinforces old colonial ideas about Zulu culture being rural, “traditional” and warlike because it now suits influential Zulu nationalists to present it this way. Buthelezi (2016) likewise highlights former President Jacob Zuma’s frequent calls for a return to a pure “African” culture and demonstrates the ways supporters of the Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini often frame royal activities as “traditional” and so pitted against anything urban and modern. Both Wright and Mazel (1991) and, more recently, Buthelezi (2016) and Kotze (pers. comm., September 14, 2017) emphasise the perceived significance museums and cultural institutions have for these nationalist ideologues in propagating this story of a coherent Zulu nation. As Buthelezi (2016, 598) demonstrates, it is often material

culture that is mobilised as evidence of a timeless, tribalised past. Thus, research such as this and the FHYA project which, as McNulty explains, “critically engage with overarching or generic categorisations of Zulu materials that may, or may not, even be Zulu,” are anathema to these twenty-first century Zulu nationalists’ interests, since they “would want that category to remain” despite its colonial roots (McNulty, pers. comm., July 7, 2017). It remains crucial to remember that evidence, whatever its purpose, can be fragile.

6.5. Casting Items Back in Time

6.5.1. Historicising the Collection Classifications

Hamilton and Leibhammer (2016a, 24) coined the evocative term, “marooned out of time” to explain precisely this apparently ahistorical, timeless nature of archival items collected and produced during the colonial era. As they assert, most museum items classified as Zulu, powerful or otherwise, are systematically denied a history after entering a museum. It is a situation, they argue, culminating from systems that divide items according to “type,” that label them by “tribe” or “ethnic group,” that fail to record dates of origin or place of provenance, or that simply provide no space for other contextual details, so that these are lost in time (24). These systems, of which Miss Shaw’s cataloguing scheme is certainly one, obscure the many events and transformations these items have endured so that their entry into museums becomes the definitive and final moment in their biographies. While my interlocutors did suggest events or transformations specific to the items we discussed that might immediately enfold them back in time, such as Mxolisi Mdluli’s conclusion that item 8982, classified by the SAM as a “stick,” probably belonged to a praise poet present at the Battle of Isandlwana, the sheer effectiveness of systems at obscuring details makes this difficult to validate (Dundee Workshop, March 30, 2017).

Participants found other ways, however, to illuminate the historical nature of items they examined, not least by drawing them into relationships with “modern” versions that many still encounter in their everyday lives. Once again, the *ukhamba* became a focal point of such discussions. During our first workshop in Groutville, Bongeka Tshingana shared that she has an *ukhamba* at home. She recognises it as belonging to the same group of objects as 1164, despite being made of different materials and put to a different use than beer drinking:

Tshingana: Now in the modern day, it is made from plastic. Even though before it was made of clay. I do have one. Mine is made of plastic and it is covered with beads. It's for decoration.
(Groutville Workshop, 2016)

Louis Eksteen, Dundee, and Nxumalo, Eshowe, also commented on plastic versions of *izinkhamba* that are, apparently, now widely available in their communities.

Eksteen: What is significant for me [is] they are selling in these spaza shops modern plastic ones that are actually [made of] thin plastic, [but] even though it's mass produced, it's still got the shape.
(Dundee Workshop, 2017)

Nxumalo: It must be made of clay. Because we have plastic ones today, from China. Yes, the Chinese made these plastic ones and they sell because they don't break. They're not used for ceremonies like this [...] But the Chinese are making the plastic ones. And the disadvantage is it makes the beer go sour faster than it should.
(Eshowe Workshop, 2017)

What is interesting is that despite their apparent prevalence, there is no example of a plastic *ukhamba* in the Iziko collection. A reasonable explanation for this is that these plastic, Chinese-produced versions only flooded markets in KZN in more recent years. Since the SAM and Iziko have not, for reasons proposed in Chapter 5, expanded this "Natal Nguni" collection since the 1980s, plastic *izinkhamba* are not included. My argument is, however, that if Iziko is serious about decolonising its collection, it must include and record such items as plastic *izinkhamba* and link them with earlier versions, since this tells a powerful narrative about a dynamic culture. While several interlocutors were obviously disgruntled by increasing Chinese influence in their community and the adverse impact it is having on their local economies, this is no reason not to record this chapter in history. Kotze (pers. comm., September 14, 2017) similarly notes that the Durban Local History Museums ceased collecting before Chinese influence was keenly felt in his community and so the collection is silent on this. He suggests that while the museum's role is not to condone or praise Chinese influence here, it should at least record its impact on a dynamic Zulu culture.

A lively discussion about a Zulu hairpin during the FHYA workshop at Eshowe gave another glimpse into the way digital databases might effectively portray this evolution in material culture over time. McNulty showed the group a photograph of a wooden hairpin with a beaded head that is now included in the FHYA digital archive. Alfred Court Haddon collected the hairpin in 1905 and the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in Cambridge, UK, accessioned it soon afterwards. The label describes its provenance as “Africa, Southern Africa, Republic of South Africa, Zululand.” As soon as Nxumalo saw the photo, she declared that there is now a more recent version of this:

Nxumalo: It has got a new name. They call it *hlokoloza*. It’s made of steel. And it’s got a knob at the top. And it’s made of steel and it is smooth. It’s made by the Chinese.

(Eshowe FYA Workshop, 2017)

The following day, at the FHYA Groutville workshop, Thuli Mtshali supported Nxumalo’s interpretation when her group saw the same picture of the Haddon hairpin:³¹

Mtshali: You still find it today, like people sell it. I only knew at this time that it’s *hlokoloza*. People who grow their hair and then they use it to scratch, to *hlokoloza*.

(Groutville FHYA Workshop, 2017)

In Eshowe, Nxumalo drove home at lunchbreak to fetch one of her own *hlokoloza* that she had bought recently from a “Chinese” shop. She uses it to decorate her hair and scratch her head, as the owner of Haddon’s hairpin presumably once did. During the afternoon session, the group entered information about this *hlokoloza* in the “other information” section in the FHYA’s digital record. This means the two items are now intrinsically connected across the centuries by this system, so that a search for one will deliver results for both. Reflecting on this workshop some days later, McNulty (pers. comm., July 7, 2017) suggested that the hairpin is “a clear and amazing example” that items are “not timeless...that things do change,” that the people who own them have a history. Compared to the SAM’s refusal to accession Pally’s “mission goods” from Nongoma on the grounds they were foreign influenced

³¹ I partnered with the FHYA to facilitate a second workshop at Luthuli Museum, Groutville, on 30 June 2017.

and so inauthentic, this is a very different way of treating items that rejects colonial ideas about collecting traditional, static cultures.



Figure 15: The workshop group entering information about Nxumalo's hlokoloza into the FHYA database.

6.5.2. Expanding the Collection

We also discussed many other items during the workshops for which, unlike the *ukhamba* or *hlokoloza*, there is no obvious earlier precedent in the SAM collection. Of the 60 people who participated in the *What's in Your Bag?/ Yini Esikhwameni Sakho?* activity, where group members identified the three most important items they had with them that day, at least three-quarters chose their cell phones. Those choosing this item ranged from the youngest to the eldest participants, from the most to the least educated, and included relatively equal numbers of men and women. Bell (2016, 2018) identifies cell phones as particularly interesting items for anthropologists precisely because they materialise so many value systems and beliefs. Indeed, my interlocutors' reasons for selecting this item varied, as did their models of cell phones. Most shared that they use their phone primarily for communication, either through calling, text messaging, WhatsApp, Skype, or Facebook, where the latter is preferable to many since the Facebook Zero version means they can avoid paying South Africa's high data costs, a point I discuss further in Chapter 7. Nkabinde, Eshowe, has two cell phones that work on different networks; he uses one to receive calls and messages from his children and



Figure 16: Boyzie Myeni, Groutville, was one of many interlocutors who selected their cell phone as an important item.

grandchildren and one to make calls, so that he can make the most of different network tariff charges. Other interlocutors use their phone as a storage device for keeping photos and videos of their friends and family, or copies of such important documents as their South African identity books, especially crucial when applying for jobs, as many interlocutors were. A few younger participants at Groutville use their phones to store music. Another shared that he uses it to keep appointment reminders. At Eshowe, Nxumalo and Khosi Shange told us that they use their phones for banking; Shange explained that her phone alerts her if someone is making fraudulent transactions with her account.

Several participants at Dundee shared that they use their phones to connect to the Internet so that they can access information to help them with their research work, since other networks are unreliable in their area. Sphelele Ntombela, Ulundi, uses a phone that belonged to her late mother and so has sentimental value, while Leveridge, Dundee, confessed that his cell phone is important but is also “a cursed thing,” evidence of our sometimes contentious relationship with this technology (Dundee Workshop, March 30, 2017).

These cell phones implicate the participants in vast, global trade and communication networks that extend far beyond the borders of their communities and country. Nxumalo, for example, uses her phone to Skype her daughter in Norway, and Xulu regularly exchanges text-based messages with her adopted daughter, who now lives in London. Moreover, the phones these interlocutors use are materially “global,” being composed of minerals extracted in China, Chile, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Australia, America, and India, which are then transported to huge factories in China, where they are assembled as smartphones (Olingo 2015, Bell 2016). The full social and environmental impacts of this process, specifically prolonged and violent

conflict over cobalt reserves in the Congo, are, however, largely concealed by this “universal” item since few consumers are aware of its supply chain (Kelly 2016).

What is significant is that the participants’ myriad explanations for choosing the cell phone as a treasured item demonstrates the ways they have adapted this seemingly universal device to suit their more local needs, and that their local needs shape their intimate relationship with their device. As Horst and Miller (2012) and Bell and Kuipers (2018) contend, we cannot generalise about the ways cell phone technology is used worldwide. Cultural differences, as the contributors to Horst and Miller’s volume reveal, persist in the digital world and are not simply historical; they continue being constructed today. Jo Tacchi’s (2012) study of mobile phone use in Mozambique, Jamaica and China, for example, emphasises that media is not a universal experience since, like in KZN, these devices are put to very different uses by these communities. As Bell (2016) argues, there may be a universal “moral panic” about what cell phones are doing to us, but the ways they affect and transform people is quite different, and this is where culture plays a significant role. To exclude digital devices from a museum collection on the grounds that they are not “Zulu” is to persist with a misguided colonial idea that Zulu communities have ever been cloistered from global historical events and that their material culture must reflect an innate and timeless culture.

What we should take care to avoid, however, is incorporating digital devices into any museum collection as “evidence” that a community has moved from an unmediated pre-digital world to a more mediated digital one. This risks trapping us once again in narratives of authenticity. As Miller and Horst (2012) argue, people rely on new media to continue mediating existing relationships. Likewise, Bell and Kuipers (2018) maintain that cell phones might amplify existing trends in kinship relations at the same time as transforming them. For example, Nxumalo maintains contact with her daughter in Norway through her cell phone and so, in a sense, relies on this media to remain a mother. Miller and Horst suggest that understanding the concept of being a mother is as much a form of mediation as being on the Internet and it is the discrepancy between expectations and experience that determines choices over which media to engage with. If we reject this notion of authenticity and an idea that pre-digital worlds are unmediated, we begin to recognise that everyone “has an equal

right to be seen as the exemplification of digital culture” because we are all results of culture as mediation through various rules, be it kinship, religion or game play; no one is more or less authentic (Miller and Horst 2012, 15). Accepting this thesis means we can overcome a perceived binary division between traditional and modern items that participants selected. That Nkabinde chose *umkhonto* (spear) and *ibeshu* (“traditional” male apron) as his other objects, or that Dumusile Luthuli, Groutville, chose her diary and Xulu her rosary, is subsequently less surprising since these items similarly mediate their relationships with the world around them.

Equally significant is that the many items participants shared during this activity are self-selected. They are objects that *they* consider important and instrumental to their identities. They are not objects that a museum has decided are representative of their culture, as was arguably the case when the SAM collected baskets and pottery. The activity was a rudimentary exercise in curating, but the differences between the items chosen by these interlocutors and those languishing in the current collection deserve greater attention in any decolonising project serious about ensuring originating communities have agency to represent themselves.

6.6. Discussion

Cataloguing and classifying are always problematic tasks. As Bowker and Star (2000, 41) convincingly argue, “no one classification system organizes reality for everyone.” My fieldwork data certainly supports this contention, highlighting as it does the many silences incorporated in the colonial SAM system. These exclusions have too frequently been overlooked, since categories are blurred when differences are either melded or eliminated (230). As is the case with the SAM, what is included or excluded in the classification scheme reproduces and reinforces power structures as part of a universalising strategy that allows us to draw and communicate comparisons across vast distances (241). This, as discussed in the preceding chapter, was certainly one of Miss Shaw’s intentions. Yet, such universalising systems lead to a loss of local understanding, as with the SAM’s Natal Nguni collection, which makes them determinedly inflexible. What neither Bowker and Star nor I am not advocating, however, is an attempt to replace a “universally applicable information system” with one that encompasses all and only the needs of the community it serves

(313). This risks prompting isolation, something historically marginalised Zulu communities have experienced too often in the past. Moreover, simply replacing one system with another also fails to make visible the constructed nature of categories and classifications in the first place. It is this revealing that is key in decolonising knowledge production. Instead, we might work with Bowker and Star's notion of "boundary infrastructures" (314). These infrastructures are sufficiently flexible that they can be shared by diverse communities of practice, because they recognise that different communities constitute information objects differently and consider some information more important than others. In short, they allow us to "recognize our own hybrid natures without losing our individuality" (317). Digital museum catalogues, I argue, could potentially act as boundary infrastructures because they can accommodate these different ways of organising the world and so, as Geismar (2012) points out, expose and reveal the ways collections are constructed and organised.

Revealing that the notion of a homogenous Natal Nguni tribe is a colonial invention is certainly a first step towards decolonising the collection. This requires interrogating the classification system and producing a more nuanced understanding of regional differences within this group through, for example, incorporating the various regional names for objects, even when these are contested. It also demands recognising that there is no "traditional" Zulu culture because movement and migration in this region means people here have always exchanged ideas and techniques and then adapted and incorporated them with their own so that "mission goods" are no more a break with the past than digital tools are today. Historicising items by building links and connections between objects is one way of drawing them back into time in ways that demonstrate a dynamic culture that challenges the colonial narrative of the SAM. Furthermore, the community can create links between items that they consider important, for example, between items associated with the significant beer drinking ceremonies, rather than simply by object type or area, as the SAM previously did. And within these assemblages, there is scope for developing new hierarchies of objects, constructed according to the community's way of organising the world, so that the *ukhamba* is perhaps prioritised over the *isikhetho*. Decolonisation is impossible without taking seriously alternative ontologies, which means, in the case of museums, respecting a less dichotomous division between

subject and object and an acceptance that agency can be distributed. This should not only impact how such items are (re)classified and (re)catalogued but must also impact the ways they are stored and handled, information that needs to be available on the item's associated records.

Most urgent is developing this catalogue in isiZulu because failing to do this means continuing to exclude those people most marginalised by colonialism and apartheid. Language cannot be dissociated from power, since it is not simply the form in which knowledge is produced; it determines *what* knowledge is produced (Mudimbe 1988). Ngugi wa Thiong'o (2000, 3) likewise argues persuasively that producing knowledge in one's own language is fundamental to a community's "spiritual strength" and ability to constantly renew itself through culture, in renegotiating power relations and through its relationship with its entire milieu. As such, persisting with a purely English language cataloguing system, regardless of how effectively it curates collections according to community needs, undermines a serious decolonisation project. Yet, as I discuss in my next chapter, reconfiguring a digital catalogue that accounts for the alternative narratives constructed by my interlocutors is not, on its own, the answer to decolonising museum collections in the digital age. Returning once more to Povinelli's (2011, 152) notion of the ideal postcolonial collection, we must remember that the task of a postcolonial archivist, or curator, cannot simply be gathering subaltern histories so that these new artefacts tell a "different, subjugated" history. Subaltern and Indigenous archives, as Povinelli makes clear, must challenge the very ontological assumptions on which the archive is based.

7. Chapter 7 – Digital Difficulties: Re-examining the Digital Landscape in South Africa



Figure 17: Participants at Eshowe queue up for an opportunity to try the Five Hundred Year Archive exemplar; Nini Xulu takes detailed, handwritten notes so that she can access the database again in future. (Eshowe)

7.1. Introduction

Ross Parry (2007) suggests that museum computerisation began with the Smithsonian Institution's landmark information retrieval project in 1967, which formally began exploring the possibilities of automation. In that same year, the Museum Computer Network (MCN) was established in the USA. Simultaneously, Parry argues, many museums worldwide started confronting fundamental issues regarding colonial legacies that impacted curatorial work more immediately at this time than did emerging digital technologies. While, as my fifth chapter shows, South African museums began considering the merits of computerisation around the same time, in the 1970s, this kind of self-reflection on a colonial legacy came far later than in other countries. Since independence in 1994, South African museums have experienced a difficult relationship with digital technologies, as I explore below. In recent years, digitisation projects have been framed as both a way of achieving much

needed transformation (Gibson and Turner 2012, Iziko Museums of South Africa 2014a) and another form of imperialism.

As Parry (2007) points out, technology itself does not have an inherent use but is instead continuously constructed and contested by society so that these wider concerns affect the relationships between museums and digital technologies. In South Africa, this relationship is complicated by the notion of the digital divide that I discussed in my second chapter. Certainly, Pickover (2014, 9), a leading South African archivist, frames the digital divide here as less a “technological or technical” challenge than a “social and political one.” Discussion about digitisation projects must, she argues, be aligned with local discussions about the archive and “the political economy of digitisation projects, the politics of digitisation, the ethics of representation and the issue of digital repatriation” (9). My contention is that in South Africa it is both a social and cultural issue, but it is also one that concerns physical access to, and the use, of technologies.

Indeed, while my previous chapters argue that opportunities *do* exist for deconstructing colonial narratives, producing multivocal knowledge does also depend on previously marginalised communities actually accessing and engaging with the items and records, whether in digital or analogue form. In terms of digital engagement, there is frequent talk of Africa “leapfrogging” technology, an idea that less economically developed countries can adopt modern technologies to move forward rapidly without going through any intermediary steps. With mobile-phone penetration at 68% in South Africa, it does seem, then, as if the country has made this leap and so making information digitally available would be a viable way for museums to reach new audiences (Rosenthal 2017). In this chapter, I wish to interrogate this assumption. I explore how, and if, these technologies can actually play a meaningful role in this deconstruction process, particularly in terms of descendant communities interacting with digitised collections.

While the statistics are hopeful, my fieldwork with communities in KZN suggests there are barriers to engaging with online materials that are not solved by possessing a cell phone, even if it is Internet enabled. I argue that using technology to decolonise museum collections thus requires a closer assessment of the digital landscape that goes beyond just analysing nationwide statistics about *potential*

Internet access and instead considers more localised issues and concerns. Otherwise, even the most self-consciously decolonising projects will fail to reach and benefit these descendent communities.

I begin this chapter with an assessment of earlier digitisation projects in South Africa, including the Digital Innovation South Africa (DISA) and Aluka. I then consider the Five Hundred Year Archive (FHYA) project, an initiative focused specifically on rethinking the southern African archive, beginning with its online, cross-institutional exemplar. In many ways, the FHYA is a response to the problematic DISA-Aluka project, which provoked outrage among South African academics for its neo-colonial agenda and which arguably halted digitisation initiatives in the country for more than a decade (Lalu 2007, Breckenridge 2014, Pickover 2014). I evaluate the various ways the FHYA is different from other museum digitisation projects, specifically in terms of its search function and public comments spaces, which are deliberate and impressive attempts to unsettle dominant narratives in the digital space.

Drawing on fieldwork I conducted in KZN, some in conjunction with the FHYA, I examine how and why my interlocutors choose to access the Internet and I consider the impact data costs, language, and literacy levels have on their decisions. More specifically, I reflect on how these self-identified challenges might affect decisions to interact with online museum collections in future. My intention is to encourage museums to explore ways of addressing these barriers or to find solutions that work within their descendant communities' digital realities so that they aren't further marginalised from their material culture when it is made available online. Within this framework, I explore both the potential opportunities and threats descendant communities might experience from being able to access digital versions of their material culture online.

7.2. Digital Imperialism and Heritage Theft

Despite a marked decline in South African digitisation projects over the past decade (Breckenridge 2014), South Africa does have a history of undertaking them, particularly those documenting struggles for freedom, which flourished at the turn of the century. Allen Isaacman, Lalu, and Thomas Nygren (2005) identified the following projects as among the most important ones: the SADC project, "A History

of the Liberation Struggle in Southern Africa”; Howard University's South Africa Research and Archives Project; the University of Connecticut–African National Congress Partnership; the African Archivist Project at Michigan State University; the Nordic Documentation on the Liberation Struggle in Southern Africa; and the Mellon Foundation-funded Digital Imaging South Africa (DISA) project. Conducted over two phases, the second stage of DISA was integrated into Isaacman and Lalu's own Aluka digitisation initiative, a project and partnership that later gave South African academics reason to equate digitisation with “heritage theft” and neo-colonialism, as I discuss below (Breckenridge 2014, 501). The more recent FHYA project is, in many ways, a project that directly addresses and dismantles this equation, albeit imperfectly.

The DISA-Aluka Project and Neocolonialism

DISA began in 1997 as a joint project between the University of Witswatersrand (Wits), University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) and UCT, funded by the Andrew Mellon Foundation, USA. An intentionally national project aimed at collating dispersed documents related to the South African liberation movement, DISA initially identified and scanned forty antiapartheid journals produced between 1960 and 1994, many of which were in poor condition or very rare (Saunders 2005, Peters and Pickover 2001). The second phase of DISA aimed, more broadly, to include “new types of material,” such as archival texts and sound recordings related to the liberation movement (Saunders 2005, 347). This phase coincided with another Mellon funded project: Aluka. Focused on the wider liberation struggles in Africa, Aluka was related to DISA, but also a markedly more “ambitious” project (Saunders 2005, 349). Where it also differed from preceding digitisation projects was its interest in probing the debates and analytical frameworks through which these struggles are both studied and analysed (Isaacman, Lalu, and Nygren 2005, 56). Inspired by the debates in *Refiguring the Archive* (Hamilton et al. 2002), Aluka aimed to configure a new archive, one unbounded by “the categories and orthodoxies” that historically shaped how we understand these struggle movements (Isaacman, Lalu, and Nygren 2005, 61). At its core, then, Aluka hoped to disrupt the kinds of colonial information structures and categories embedded by systems such as Miss Shaw's while also making information newly available to South Africans.

This archival interrogation did not, in fact, happen. Instead, Rassool (2018) laments that Aluka “unimaginatively reproduced an old idea of archive,” making it a “missed opportunity” because the interests of funding bodies located in the Global North, rather than those of South Africans, dictated the final project. Unequal access to the project resources and imbalanced information flows between the Global North and South were yet another way these projects eventually reproduced old colonial paradigms and relationships (Lalu 2007). Pickover (2005) had earlier raised such concerns about neoliberal markets and digitisation projects. That knowledge can be commodified and traded in ways linked to the “political economy of Western domination and exploitation” was not a new idea (Marx 1939, Fabian 1983, 96). Both DISA and Aluka were aware of these issues from the early project stages (Peters and Pickover 2001, Isaacman, Lalu, and Nygren 2005); DISA even tried to mitigate the digital divide by distributing resources on CD-ROMs to places where Internet connectivity was unreliable (Peters and Pickover 2001).

The argument, however, took on new urgency once the full impact of DISA-Aluka’s complicated licensing and open access agreements became clear. While various licensing restrictions guarded against the free distribution of digitised artefacts gathered from institutions in the Global North, South African archives did not enjoy the same protection. Instead, Aluka and its American funders retained control of the data and were free to distribute it as they liked. Moreover, while the materials were accessible at some South African institutions through JSTOR, they were not freely available to the general South African public. Pickover (2005, 2014) expressed further concerns that accessing Aluka’s material depended on technologies more widely and affordably available in the Global North, reinforcing old colonial models of inequality. Geismar (2014, 259) also makes this point when challenging Jannis Kallinikos et al.’s (2010) notion that digital objects are “editable, interactive, open, and distributed,” arguing instead that these qualities are “dependent upon rather than inherent to digital technologies.”

Keith Breckenridge (2014) argues that these intense debates about the digital divide and postcolonial imperialism are the reason for dwindling South African interest in digitisation from 2005 onwards. He also suggests that such fears about digital divides are unfounded in South Africa since, by 2007, the new undersea cables and proliferation of smartphones made accessing the Internet “a normal part of South

African life” (503), a point I contend later in this chapter. What these apprehensions about access and a lingering digital divide do indicate, however, is a deep sense in South Africa that any project digitising cultural heritage is quickly equated with colonialism if it fails to address and rectify it. Aluka ultimately failed to decolonise the archive in the ways Lalu et al. intended because it neither altered the epistemological basis of the archive nor subverted established, capitalist models of access and information flows. Developing an anticolonial digital archive thus depends on undertaking a more daunting task of addressing both the conceptual and practical issues. This is precisely what the FHYA project aims to do.

The Five Hundred Year Archive Project and Digital Decolonisation

Acutely aware of debates around digital imperialism, the FHYA pursued a determinedly anticolonial agenda even before the 2015 Rhodes Must Fall campaign made decolonisation an inescapable priority for UCT (Duggan, pers. comm., July 6, 2017). Like Aluka, the FHYA aims to be a different kind of archive; since the project is led by Carolyn Hamilton, who was instrumental in *Refiguring the Archive*, this is unsurprising. Unlike Aluka’s broad remit to digitise Africa’s liberation struggles, however, the FHYA has a limited geographical scope that focused initially on the precolonial past in modern-day southern Swaziland, KZN, and the north Eastern Cape region of South Africa. Similar to Aluka, the FHYA is a cross institutional project that also incorporates artefacts from institutions in the Global North, for example the University of Cambridge’s Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (MAA) and the Austrian Academy of Sciences. Lessons learnt from the DISA-Aluka project means, however, that South African institutions retain ownership of their materials. Despite this, both Duggan (pers. comm., July 6, 2017) and McNulty (pers. comm., July 7, 2017), core FHYA team members, confess that institutional negotiations were still protracted and complicated.

In terms of my research, the FHYA is so interesting because it intentionally challenges archival categories and classifications using “African” collections on a digital platform; Duggan (pers. comm., July 6, 2017) argues that in “rethinking archival practice, rethinking museum practices,” it is possible to “break these kinds of [categorical] silos.” Like Hamilton et al.’s (2016a) *Tribing and Untribing the Archive* project, the FHYA aims to destabilise historical, but persistent, identity labels. This makes it quite distinct from other museum or archive digital databases

that Duggan suggests are “just about the object.” As Duggan (pers. comm., July 6, 2017) explains, the FHYA is more interested in how the item “got into the museum, and...what happened in the museum,” in its object biography as a way of revealing the (mis)constructed nature of categories, especially “Zulu.” The focus is on continuity, on not marooning the object out of time once it enters the archive, which puts it in contrast with colonial museum practices (Hamilton and Leibhammer 2016c).

This relies, partly, on developing the FHYA as an interactive database that interweaves institutional records with less formal archives, but without prioritising one form of knowledge over the other. The database’s search functioning is integral to this and is a feature that also distinguishes the FHYA from other online systems. Initially, the FHYA’s technical team used a standard algorithm to present search results, but this meant weighting and organising results in a hierarchy that “privileged a very particular [way] of looking at things” (Duggan, pers. comm., July 6, 2017). Within this hierarchy, user contributions and data from the informal archives disappear “down a black hole” and so do not appear in the search results, a situation which threatens to replicate colonial modes of organising knowledge, as seen on the SAM’s catalogue cards, where only the institution’s truth is told. Duggan states that Hamilton, as the project leader, was adamant that one set of information would not be privileged over another in this way, since exposing and challenging these normalised systems is crucial for achieving the FHYA’s decolonising aims. The subsequent protracted discussions between the FHYA and the technical teams were, Duggan says, symptomatic of wider struggles to make the platform technologically compatible with the project’s broader concept.

The Hairpin and Hlokoloza story

In Chapter 6, I discussed the hairpin, or *hlokoloza*, story that participants developed during the FHYA workshops as an example of casting items back in time in ways that contradict colonial narratives of “primitive, timeless and unchanging” Indigenous societies (Hamilton and Leibhammer 2016a, 14, Croucamp 2016, Buthelezi 2016, Keane 2011). What this story also demonstrates is how the FHYA’s more egalitarian search function and user contribution tool likewise disrupts notions of authority and authorship. When Nxumalo returned to the Vukani Museum with her own *hlokoloza*, I photographed it, created an FHYA user account, and the group

uploaded the image, their description of the item, and Nxumalo's provenance information alongside the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology's record. In Groutville the following day, participants Mtshali and Zandile Manzini contributed their knowledge about the *hlokoloza* to the same record. That Nxumalo, Mtshali and Manzini are recognised as authors of this knowledge within the FYHA system is highly significant. As discussed in Chapter 5, Indigenous experts are something that colonial information systems, such as Miss Shaw's, obscured, emphasising a condescending notion that Indigenous people were incapable of knowing and representing themselves. Given the FYHA's customised search function, this new information now appears in all search results for "hairpin" or "*hlokoloza*" and not at the end of a hierarchised list, as user comments frequently do. Conceptually, this feature gives Nxumalo's and the MAA's contributions equal weight and authority within the FYHA, something that more seriously challenges the colonial modes of authority perfectly captured in Miss Shaw's A–K code for authenticating information on the catalogue cards.

In reality, Nxumalo's contribution appears in the FYHA system as authored by Nkabinde, another workshop colleague. Nkabinde registered his FYHA account using his tablet device but with my email address because, at that time, he didn't have his own email address, something the FYHA registration system requires. This is a potential barrier that I discuss in greater detail below. Subsequently, the final *hlokoloza* record was really a group effort incorporating, as it did, a photo I took of Nxumalo's *hlokoloza* on my phone, uploaded via Nkabinde's FYHA account which was registered via his tablet using my email address, and information contributed orally by all group members, but typed into the FYHA system by McNulty on his laptop. These steps, invisible when viewing the final contribution, reveal several important features of South Africa's digital landscape that I discuss further below. They are all related to issues of access, something which, as the critiques and disputes surrounding previous digitisation projects in South Africa demonstrate, is intrinsically bound up with debates over digital imperialism. While the FYHA employs various technical interventions to admirably confront the epistemological basis of the archive, it hasn't, arguably, yet focused the same attention on tackling the on-the-ground digital realities that might prevent users being able to access the platform. We can certainly understand this as a consequence of academics and

researchers, who largely do not experience access issues, being the primary audience for archives at this stage. In the longer term, however, ignoring the descendent community's realities threatens the FHYA's potential to fundamentally decolonise the archive.



Figure 18: Thandi Nxumalo's hlokoloza (top left); Gibson using Sabelo Nkabinde's tablet device to register him on the FHYA system (top right); McNulty assists the group with entering new information about the hairpin in the FHYA system (bottom).

7.3. Infrastructure and Barriers to Access

During my fieldwork, my interlocutors identified, explicitly and implicitly, numerous barriers affecting how their communities might access and engage with online platforms. Several are related to infrastructure issues, specifically limited fixed Internet and unreliable mobile phone coverage outside South Africa's urban centres. Other hurdles include South Africa's extraordinarily high data costs, as well

as literacy and language barriers that make reading English language content a serious challenge. Generational differences and different digital values also affect how people choose to interact with technology with these communities, further highlighting how heterogeneous they are.

7.3.1. Fixed Internet Access

“So this, this could show you how...sorry, the Internet, you know how these things are, we just have to wait for it to wake up.”
(Eshowe FHYA Workshop, 2017)

“When this loads up, maybe we should just give it two minutes to load.”
(Groutville FHYA Workshop, 2017)

Internet access, or, rather, lack of Internet access, was undoubtedly the greatest challenge during workshops at both Eshowe and Groutville in June 2017. Statistically, Internet users in South Africa increased by 1143% between the year 2000 and June 2017, and penetration is now at 54% of the population (Internet World Stats 2018). Reports such as Jonathan Rosenthal’s (2017) one on technological leapfrogging in Africa also raise expectations about more ubiquitous Internet access in South Africa, as does Breckenridge’s (2014, 503) claim that accessing the Internet is now “normal” for people in South Africa. What these nationwide statistics arguably fail to reveal, however, is the huge disparities in Internet access *within* South Africa. The World Wide Worx’s (2017) report on the country’s Internet access suggests a formidable divide along race lines, with over two thirds of white people enjoying Internet access (69.1%), compared to just 47.7% of Black, 48.1% of Indian, and 45.8% of Coloured users (Goldstruck 2017). The report also suggests that Sachil Singh’s (2008) conclusions about an urban-rural divide still hold true nearly a decade later.³²

My own findings in KZN certainly tally with this research. At the Luthuli Museum in peri-urban Groutville, for example, there is the luxury of WiFi Internet in the Interpretation Centre where we held the workshop. However, the connection speed on that day was too slow to effectively load the FHYA exemplar online, despite it

³² Singh’s research in Maputaland, KZN, found that people living outside major urban centres tend to have more limited Internet access and infrastructure, despite various government-led IT projects in rural areas.

being a “quite lightweight” system (McNulty, pers. comm., July 7, 2017).

Consequently, our workshop discussions were frequently interspersed with apologies that we must wait for something to load, or attempts to open webpages in different browsers, as per the comments at the start of this section (Groutville FHYA Workshop, June 30, 2017).

At Eshowe, we had no expectations of WiFi. Instead, we planned to use McNulty’s cell phone as a WiFi hub and connect digital devices through this. Patchy cell phone reception in the Vukani Museum area, however, made this very difficult. After lunch, we remained at the Adam’s Outpost restaurant to use their WiFi network so that the group had an opportunity to try the FHYA system for themselves. Reflecting on the workshop experience a few days later, McNulty (pers. comm., July 7, 2017) accurately summarised that “we learnt that not everyone has Internet.” It’s a simple conclusion but, despite compelling statistics, is frequently overlooked. What is significant, as the World Wide Worx report suggests, is that groups with more limited access to fixed Internet connections are the same people historically marginalised from other important economic resources.

While inconsistent network coverage is certainly an issue, mobile phones *do* offer more realistic possibilities for accessing the Internet for people living outside the urban centres in areas where formal infrastructure is poor. Shapshak (2017) reports that there are an estimated 29 million smartphones in South Africa and that 7 million South Africans use only mobile devices to access the Internet. As I discussed in the previous chapter, of the 60 people who participated in the What’s in Your Bag?/ *Yini Esikhwameni Sakho?* workshop activity, where group members identified the three most important items they had with them that day, at least three-quarters chose their cell phones, many of which were smartphones. However, also drawing on research published in the World Wide Worx report, Shapshak draws attention to the fact that there are only 21 million Internet users in the country, which means 8 million South Africans have the potential to access the Internet through their cell phones, yet do not.

7.3.2. Debilitating Data Costs

South Africa’s extraordinarily high data costs, the highest amongst Africa’s leading economies, is often cited as the reason for lower Internet use (Shapshak 2017, Business Tech 2017). Throughout my fieldwork research, data remained a

preoccupation for my interlocutors. I frequently sent airtime to participants so that we could keep in touch using WhatsApp or text messages. Like me, they used prepaid cell phones and so enjoyed none of the discounted data bundles offered by monthly contracts.

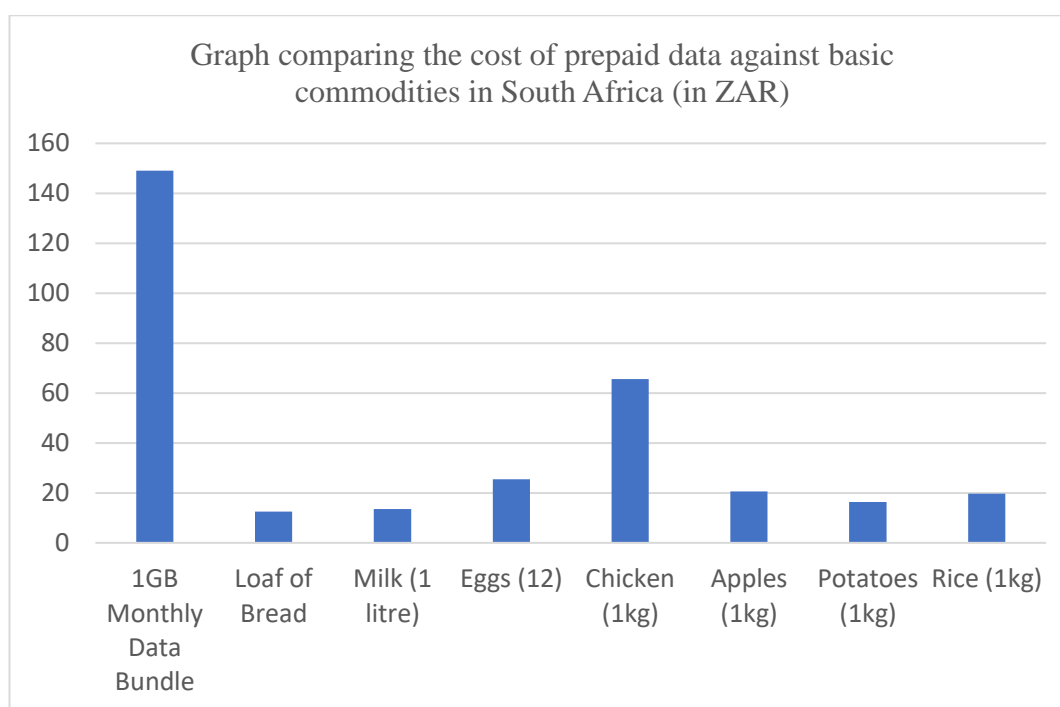


Figure 19: Graph comparing the cost of prepaid data in South Africa with basic commodities.

For the younger participants in particular, data was an apparently precious commodity. During the FHYA workshop in Groutville, Crosby Luhlongwane spoke emphatically about “the data situation.” When discussing the sites and types of information the group might access online, Luhlongwane declared, “People are like, I won’t download, I’ll just view. I’ll also do that to save on data.” He explained that he does visit Facebook but, “then I turn off my data and I can just browse, and I know I’m *safe* because I don’t use data.” His choice of words is interesting, highlighting, as they do, the perceived threat data costs pose to accessing the Internet. That this data resource determines how and what digital information Luhlongwane will access is undoubted. His fellow participants did not contradict his observation and I noted many nodding in agreement.

When completing the workshop evaluation surveys, of the ten people who answered that they had not made a visit to a museum website since the workshop, one gave the reason that it takes “too much data to access them.” Where this is significant for the

FHYA, and other museums hoping to connect digitally with these groups, is thinking about how they can address this very real access barrier. Following the workshops, McNulty (pers. comm., July 7, 2017) expressed concern that interacting with the FHYA platform means people would “be burning data.” In this same conversation with McNulty, I also shared that one of my interlocutors had sent me a message to say he wanted to upload a photo to the FHYA but he didn’t have the data to do it, so could I send him some. Either platforms need to persuade communities that accessing their content is a priority and worth using their limited data to do so, or, more realistically, they need to find a solution akin to Facebook and Wikipedia’s zero-rated platforms. Although there are ethical considerations about using zero-rated plans, something the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) defines as those that “exempt particular data from counting against a user’s data cap, or from accruing any excess usage charges,” they are certainly a short-term solution to high data costs (McSherry, Malcolm, and Walsh 2016). Not addressing this data cost concern almost certainly means excluding groups of descendent community members from their digitised heritage, regardless of whether the content itself reflects an admirable attempt to decolonise the archive, as FHYA arguably does.

7.3.3. Email addresses

Back in Cape Town, a few days after our workshops in KZN, Duggan (pers. comm., July 6, 2017) shared an excerpt from an early conversation between the FHYA team and the system developers. As discussed above, users must have an email address if they want to register an FHYA account. Duggan recalls asking the developers during the initial stages of the project, “what about people without email addresses?” The developers, she says, were dismissive of this concern, claiming that “everyone has an email address.”

In fact, my research findings suggest that this is not the case. In Groutville, when I asked participants whether they had an email address, just seven people raised their hands, and only Luhlongwane claimed to use his regularly (Groutville FHYA workshop, June 30, 2017). When I had asked this question previously at Ulundi, only three people said that they had email addresses, and these were all KwaZulu Cultural Museum staff members sitting in on the sessions (Ulundi workshop, April 4, 2017). At Eshowe, I used my personal email address to register an FHYA account for the group, since the participants either had no email address, or couldn’t remember their

email username or password, suggesting they use it irregularly (Eshowe FHYA workshop, June 29, 2017).

The situation was different in Dundee. This group was very familiar with email and uses it regularly to communicate for work. During the workshop's "Retelling the Stories" sessions, all four sub-groups said that they would email information about their items to the imaginary researcher, rather than send information any other way (Dundee workshop, March 30, 2017). Interestingly, when I asked the group how they access their emails, most shared that they check this on a laptop or desktop computer, despite more than half the group owning a smartphone. Their computers are primarily located at their workplaces, which seems to suggest they equate email with work-related activities, rather than using this for personal communication or their own research when data costs might become an issue.

By comparison, the absence of email addresses among participants in Groutville, Eshowe and Ulundi indicates their exclusion from the more formal economy and education sectors. This reiterates questions raised above about who, exactly, the FHYA and other museums might hope to reach through their digital platforms. Registering with an email address would be no issue for the Dundee group, but, although their contributions are certainly informed and significant, given that they are already involved in a dialogue about South African heritage through their work, they would not be an entirely new audience in these debates. Nor are they necessarily representative of the wider descendent communities, or those most marginalised by history and subsequent socioeconomic realities.

7.3.4. Literacy and Linguistic Barriers³³

While fractured infrastructure, high data costs and limited email directly affect how users access the Internet, other factors, specifically literacy levels and linguistic skills, have more indirect effects on how people engage with online content. The World Wide Worx (2017) report cites education as a barrier to Internet access "with less than 20 per cent access among all segments that have below Grade 7 education." Certainly, some of my interlocutors fall into this category, specifically the more

³³ For the purposes of this chapter, I am using UNESCO's "most common understanding" of literacy as a "set of tangible skills – particularly the cognitive skills of reading and writing – that are independent of the context in which they are acquired and the background of the person who acquires them" (2005, 149).

mature participants in Ulundi, whose formal education was severely stunted by Bantu Education policies. This, as I mentioned in Chapter 6, became obvious at the very start of our workshop at KwaZulu Cultural Museum when younger participants had to read the information sheets and consent forms to the older participants before they signed them. When I visited Ulundi again to perform the workshop evaluations, I noted this issue in my research diary entry that evening:

“I asked who would like to use the tablet first. Only one person volunteered; the others were hesitant, particularly the babas, even when someone helped me better explain the task in isiZulu. It soon became clear that the problem was not just the tablets but also that the questions are written. As such, the participants decided that the best option was to answer the survey in small groups, rather than individually” (Research diary entry, 5 June 2017).

During the Ulundi workshop itself, appendix 2.5Ntombela stated more explicitly that illiteracy persists within her community, especially among the elder members. When talking about the best way to contact participants, she shared that,

“I think it will depend on the age group. Because for our grandfathers or grandmothers, I don’t think they will use a smartphone. They will just use those ordinary phones for SMSing. But for them as well, ***some of them can’t read*** and can’t send SMSs, so it will be better to just phone.” (Ulundi Workshop 2017).

The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (Howie et al. 2016) suggests that illiteracy in South Africa is not, in fact, limited to older generations and that nearly 80% of Grade 4 pupils in South Africa cannot read.³⁴ It is consequently an oversight to assume that this barrier is purely generational and will inevitably cease to matter within a few years. In terms of my research, it is highly significant that illiteracy potentially excludes older descendant community members from accessing digital platforms. Not only is this group the most historically marginalised, it is also, potentially, the bearer of the most valuable community knowledge. This was a point acknowledged by both younger and older participants. At Groutville, Xolani Myeni advised that I speak with the *babas* (grandfathers) and *gogos* (grandmothers) because they would know more about the items we’d been discussing. In Eshowe, Nxumalo declared that “[young people] don’t know anything” about *izilulu* (the baskets used to store and keep cool dried goods), “they know fridges” (Eshowe Workshop 2017). Young people, Xulu further contended, “look down” on these Zulu items (Eshowe

³⁴ Pupils in South African Grade 4 are 8–9 years old.

Workshop, February 3, 2017). As such, it seems imperative that the older generation be involved in any multivocal knowledge project. Duggan (pers. comm., July 6, 2017), following the workshops, agreed that this “on the ground reality” means the FHYA must consider alternative ways of working with the community, possibly by installing the system in libraries or museums “where there is somebody who says, look we need to call in the *gogos* and sit with them and walk through it with them.”

Being able to read does not, however, mean that literate participants can easily navigate and access content available online since this is still predominantly in English. During the first Groutville workshop, I realised that there exists a great disparity in English language ability, something that would have excluded some participants from contributing if we had conducted all activities in English. At Ulundi, only a few participants were comfortable speaking in English, and the older participants spoke no English at all. Even if participants all spoke excellent English, as they did at Eshowe, they still chose to speak in isiZulu at times, presumably because they felt more comfortable doing so. This was not the only language-related issue I encountered, but this experience alone demands we challenge the hegemony of English in South African museums. Otherwise, there is little point in making even the existing knowledge about collections available to originating communities if they cannot easily understand the language in which it is communicated. When the reasons for limited English language ability can be traced back to such apartheid legislation as the Bantu Education Act No. 47 of 1953, this kind of linguistic exclusion is deeply problematic for organisations trying to redress the legacies of apartheid and colonialism.

This is not a problem limited to KZN: based on her own research experience, Duggan (pers. comm., July 6, 2017) has concluded that if they take the FHYA to Lesotho, “everything’s going to have to be translated because English is completely useless.” McNulty told the group in Groutville that making a Zulu version of the FHYA website where, “instead of saying search, it would say, like, *seshu*,” was a “long-term plan.” While this seems to be pandering to the needs of a minority, in terms of decolonising the collections, the importance of this minority far outweighs its small size, since these are exactly the people who have been most excluded by museum institutions in the past. Redressing this injustice is impossible unless their particular on-the-ground challenges are acknowledged and creative solutions are

found to meet them. Otherwise, the online databases are accessible only to those with higher income, education, and English literacy levels, who tend to live in urban centres; this is not these descendent communities' demographic.

7.3.5. Generational Divides

“Yes that would appeal to the younger generation. But the older generation, those born before technology, I don't worry myself about these things.”
(Nxumalo, Eshowe Workshop 2017)

As the previous analysis suggests, generational differences came up time and again in our workshop discussions, especially when talking about technology. Yet, despite Nxumalo's statement above, these differences aren't as simple as “young people use technology, but older people do not.” At Eshowe in particular, where the mean participant age was the most mature, the participants demonstrated the ways in which technology is interwoven with their lives. Other than Xulu, everyone selected their cell phone as one of the three objects they always carry with them. During the day, all six participants used their cell phones to either make or receive a call. As Nkabinde revealed, he has two cell phones; one for making calls, and one for receiving them so that he can make the most of different network tariffs. At the FHYA workshop later in the year, Nkabinde also brought his new tablet device with him and we used this to register him on the FHYA system. Given how integral these devices are to their lives, it is interesting that this group agreed museums would have more success reaching older audiences through printed material such as brochures or pamphlets, whereas websites and Facebook would be better platforms for young audiences. Indeed, when conducting the electronic workshop evaluations with this group, Ntuli and Mgwaba, the youngest members of the group, assisted Xulu and Nkabinde with completing their forms, Xulu because she didn't have her glasses with her and Nkabinde because he had some issues navigating the tablet form, despite all being familiar with this type of digital device.

In Groutville, when I conducted the same tablet-based evaluations, I noted that the five participants, all under 30 years, had no trouble completing the electronic form and needed only basic instructions from me about swiping from one screen to the next. This is despite these participants often owning only a basic smartphone, not multiple digital devices. In Ulundi, the generational divide was more obvious, with younger participants taking the lead in completing the digital evaluation forms and claiming, as Ntombela did, that while the younger generation will use WhatsApp and

SMS, the older generation use “ordinary” phones, not smartphones (Eshowe Workshop, February 3, 2017). What is significant about these results is the understanding that ownership of a digital device does not automatically equate with digital literacy, nor does digital literacy depend entirely on owning a digital device. Furthermore, particularly for the Eshowe group, even if they do own a digital device that allows them to access a diverse range of information online, this isn’t always their preferred way of receiving information. What these results do suggest, however, is that decisions about how to access information are determined by age, with younger people generally being more comfortable using digital tools to access various information than their elders, who are more selective.

7.3.6. Different Digital Values

As the Eshowe group demonstrated, it is too simple to assume that once people have digital tools, they will always choose to access information using these.

Interestingly, of the seven participants who have visited museum websites or online exhibitions since the workshop, not all have used their cell phones to do so; one person used a laptop computer, and another used a desktop computer. Of these seven participants, four have also made in person visits to museums since our workshop, suggesting that, despite museums’ fears (Gilbert 2016), accessing cultural heritage information online is not seen as an absolute substitute for in person visits. Indeed, at the FHYA Groutville workshop in June, while discussing different attitudes to seeing items online and offline, Mtshali concluded that the digitised version of an object has less value for her:

Gibson: I mean is it as valuable to see this here on the screen as to go to the museum in KwaDukuza and see what they have there?

Mtshali: I think it would have more value if it is stored in a museum because that’s where history is stored.

(Groutville FHYA workshop)

Luhlongwane supported Mtshali’s view, claiming that the museum setting gives the item value beyond its physical form. Outside the museum, he says, “it would be just an object,” but the whole experience of visiting a museum means the encounter with the object is more than “visual,” that there is context which means “you also get to experience the culture element of it” and this reflects the object’s apparent value (Groutville FHYA workshop). Likewise, when I asked Dr Miya (pers. comm.,

January 26, 2017), a self-identified Zulu healer, whether he had any concerns about digital versions of powerful images circulating online, he seemed perplexed by my question and simply laughed and shook his head. While this evidence is too limited to draw irrefutable conclusions, my interlocutors apparently do not attach the same value to digital objects as they do tangible ones, even if the latter are powerful; this contrasts with the position of some Māori *iwi* (groups), who perceive digital versions of *taonga* as being just as powerful as the tangible original, raising, in turn, many issues for museums in New Zealand around digital access protocols (Brown and Nicholas 2012). In fact, if Luhlongwane and Mtshali's sentiments are echoed more widely, a major challenge faced by museums is how to develop and convey a sense of value around the digital collection that is sufficient to motivate visitors in the first place. As the evaluation surveys suggest, all participants who made a virtual museum visit in the aftermath of the workshops either "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that their decision to do so was motivated by discussions during the workshop. Only three interacted with the website, either by commenting on something or "liking" something, and, again, agreed that their actions were influenced by attending the workshop. What these findings seem to suggest is the huge amount of analogue work that must first be done to make the digital collection relevant to descendent communities operating within a more restricted digital environment.

7.4. Popular Platforms and Facebook Power

While my fieldwork findings suggest that there are very real barriers to participants accessing digital information, they simultaneously confirmed the power and reach of Facebook as a sharing platform. In June 2017, South Africa had 16 million Facebook subscribers (Internet World Stats 2018). As I have discussed above, such nationwide statistics often conceal local disparities but, in this case, many of my interlocutors *are* included in this group. Facebook's popularity among these communities might be explained, in part, by its zero-rated platform. In collaboration with Cell C and Vodacom, two of South Africa's largest mobile network providers, Facebook offers this stripped down, text-only version of the site, for which users incur no data costs.

But my interlocutors also make use of the full Facebook site, suggesting that they make decisions to prioritise accessing this platform above other activities that "eat data." Our conversation at the Groutville FHYA workshop was particularly

illuminating. Despite the various access barriers discussed during the morning, the participants shared that they all subscribe to and regularly access Facebook:

- McNulty: Do you, do you guys use Facebook? Do you write posts, and do you update your status?
Gumede: Always.
Gibson: Does anyone not have Facebook?
Myeni: I think we all do.

(Groutville FHYA workshop 2017)

Luhlongwane, while still young, is recognised locally for his jewellery designs, which are inspired by his natural surroundings. He uses this platform to “showcase [his] works” because people tell him, “do the Facebook,” signifying just how wide-reaching it is; he argues that “it’s *the* medium for certain kinds of networks.” He explained that he often uses data to upload or download images and text before switching off his data to browse further. But there’s still an initial willingness to use his valuable data on this site. Nxumalo, seemingly less concerned by data costs, also reported using Facebook to research her family history:

“I did it on Facebook, I [searched for] my surname. And they showed me, told me that we all originated from Lesotho. I do remember because I lived in Limpopo with my grandmother; that’s where I started school. I remember I started learning in Tsetswana, that’s my original language, and then when the area was given to the Pedis, we changed and started learning in Pedi. So I looked on Facebook and I found a lot of people with my surname who told me where I originated and I felt so satisfied.” (Eshowe FHYA workshop, June 29, 2017)

Clearly, Facebook has numerous different uses for these interlocutors beyond simply updating personal statuses. Building on this idea, Duggan asked the Groutville group, “if [FHYA] set up a Facebook page and put up some of this information, like one at a time, do you think people would share that?” The group’s response was, “Definitely.” Duggan (pers. comm., July 6, 2017) admitted being “astonished” by the depth of popularity participants revealed for Facebook during these workshops, especially those who don’t have email and only have a phone. She concluded that “people who are scathing of Facebook underestimate its value as an information sharing platform.” Both Duggan and McNulty subsequently expressed an interest in linking their system with Facebook so that they could ensure the FHYA content is truly widely accessible.

A cursory analysis of social media use across a selection of South African museums does suggest that most recognise Facebook as a powerful tool, since they have their own official Facebook sites. Moreover, compared with Twitter, this platform is more effective for reaching audiences and cultivating followers. The numbers themselves are, however, low when we consider that South Africa has 16 million Facebook subscribers. What this might mean, again, is the need to think more about how cultural heritage messages are communicated so that they appeal more widely.

Selection of South African museums' social media presences (June 2018)		
Museum	Facebook Followers	Twitter Followers
Iziko Museums of South Africa	8996	4903
Apartheid Museum	6894	818
KwaZulu-Natal Museum	4710	345
Robben Island Museum	3773	2467
Ditsong Museums of South Africa	3315	382
Luthuli Museum	3138	120
McGregor Museum	1717	n/a
National Museum, Bloemfontein	1504	n/a
Talana Museum	1498	23
Albany Museum	615	30
Vukani Museum	141	n/a
KwaZulu Cultural Museum	n/a	n/a

Figure 20: Table showing selection of South African museums' social media presences (2018)

That said, there are also ethical issues surrounding the use of zero-rated platforms and using them might compromise the FYHA's integrity. At first glance, they do seem to be solutions to the digital divide issue. However, as Malcolm (2014) points out, zero-rated services, such as Facebook's, are also a "dangerous compromise" with net neutrality, a concept whereby all data that travels across the Internet is

treated equally. It's a threat that India took so seriously it outlawed Facebook's Free Basics in 2016 (Bhatia 2016). Long-term, the EFF argues, zero-rated platforms stifle the development of a low-cost neutral Internet while simultaneously suffocating local language web platforms, a situation that undermines longer-term goals to challenge neocolonial power relations (Malcolm 2014). Connected with this is the Facebook–Cambridge Analytica data scandal that broke some months after I completed my fieldwork and that calls into question how the company collects and manages user data. I return to this particular point in my conclusions and recommendations chapters since it has implications for how museums can work with popular platforms without compromising their integrity.

7.5. (Unintended) Benefits and Threats

Addressing and overcoming the various barriers to access, whether through Facebook or other routes, would better facilitate these communities' access to an online platform with the intended benefit of reconnecting them with the museum's collections. What my fieldwork also revealed, however, is that this process of digitising and decolonising brings other unintended outcomes for these communities, some that potentially strengthen their ties and others that threaten to weaken them.

7.5.1. Community Building

Given the participants' immediate warmth at our first workshop in Eshowe, I had been surprised to learn that they didn't know one another already. During our second meeting, where we completed the workshop evaluation forms and I gave participants copies of their publication before sharing tea and cake at the nearby café, I realised that participants had sustained friendships built during the initial workshop. Ntuli told me that the group was delighted to be reunited in person. Some months later, Nxumalo sent me a WhatsApp image of her and the group sharing a birthday cake they had organised for her. As we departed Eshowe for the last time after the FHYA workshop, Xulu explained the group's enthusiasm as based on "people really enjoy an opportunity to talk about the past, whatever the excuse is" (Duggan, pers. comm., July 6, 2017). Similarly, at Ulundi I observed that even if people were not interested in the details we were discussing, they enjoyed working in groups. The evaluation results seemingly confirm this observation. One respondent shared that "working as a group helps the most" and another stated that the most memorable part of the workshop was "learning from each other" (Workshop evaluation results, Appendix

6). Indeed, at Ulundi, the participants even chose to work in groups when completing the evaluation form. If nothing else, the events were a chance for people to gather together in a safe space and have “a nice time.”

Marc Thomas, Hannah Waldram, and Ed Walker (2013), in their research on offline and online communities, suggest that bringing people together “through a particular lens” but in a setting where they are “having a nice time” is essential for building relationships that later develop into working partnerships. As they argue, digital interactions are not divorced and separate from offline interactions, even in the UK and USA, leading them to stress the significance of building offline communities if seeking online success. My research findings certainly suggest that this hypothesis would hold in KZN: South African museums hoping to develop digital audiences and communities will experience greater success if they first focus on building offline communities around their systems. Following the workshops, both McNulty and Duggan suggested that the FHYA might consider hosting the system in local libraries and museums in KZN. Duggan envisages FHYA facilitators in these places, people who physically gather the *gogos* and other groups in the community together and “walk them through” the system. Significant here is her recognition that online interaction with digital platforms is unlikely, and certainly unlikely to be successful, without any initial offline interaction in these communities. What this research *does* suggest is a genuine interest in this topic and a willingness to engage with these debates in such a way that offline communities form easily around the issues; the challenge for museums is stoking these enthusiastic offline communities so that they become engaged online communities.

7.5.2. Cultural Appropriation

While community building might be an unintended outcome of online engagement that strengthens descendent communities, these same digital databases pose often-unintentional risks to these groups. Over the years, South African academics, notably Lalu (2007), Lor and Britz (2004), and Pickover (2005, 2014), have expressed concern that knowledge produced in South Africa, when digitised, is too easily consumed by the Global North at the expense of the Global South. Several interlocutors echoed these apprehensions about appropriation, albeit less specifically within a digital context. Xulu spoke bitterly about seeing young models in France strut down the catwalk wearing an iteration of a Zulu *isicholo*, the headdress that

should be worn only by married women (Eshowe workshop, February 3, 2017). She expressed frustration that the “hat makers were making lots and lots of money” while the originating community, those whose culture produced this design, receive nothing. Ntuli recalled a similar situation with the *vuvuzela*, an instrument that achieved popularity and notoriety during the 2010 Soccer World Cup. The Shembe faith group has used this instrument in worship services for decades but, as Ntuli tells it, the Chinese saw a market for it in 2010 and began mass producing plastic versions of the instruments. As such, the Shembe felt that their “ownership” of the instrument was threatened and so pressed the Chinese manufacturers for a settlement deal.³⁵ Nxumalo likewise accused the Chinese of “robbing us of our own creativity,” citing examples of Xhosa skirts and *izinkhamba* being produced in “bulk” by factories in China and then sold back to originating communities in South Africa for “cheap, cheap.” Her criticism is that people in her community “made a living” out of creating these items but they become “demotivated” when cheap imitations flood the market.

Such concerns are not limited to the older generations. During the first Groutville workshop, Tshingana shared that she has a plastic *ukhamba* at home that is “covered in beads” and used only for decoration (Groutville workshop 2016). Her fellow participants were quick to point out that this version is produced by the Chinese and is inferior to a real “Zulu” *ukhamba*, which must be made of clay. Nxumalo seems to speak for many in her community when saying this situation makes her “feel sad” (Eshowe workshop, February 3, 2017).

There is a paradox that emerges around this. By making digital versions of items available on platforms that originating communities genuinely use, specifically Facebook, the originating communities are more likely to reconnect with and engage with material culture once lost to museum collections in ways that subvert the dominant narratives. However, making these items available on such widely used platforms also means they are accessible to many more people than the originating community so that the risk of misappropriation also rises. As Hollinger, repatriation case officer at the Smithsonian NMNH (pers. comm., October 22, 2015),

³⁵ I could find no record of this case or settlement details in my own rudimentary research. What is significant about this story is, however, Ntuli’s interpretation of cultural ownership and misappropriation.

convincingly argues, such fears are legitimate and real for source communities worldwide. Speaking about the pewter pipe 3D printing project, coordinated with Sherry White of the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican Indians, where digitisation made it possible to produce three identical pipes, one for each culturally affiliated tribe, Hollinger explained that safeguarding the digital files after the project was paramount. The community was understandably worried that these digital files might fall into the wrong hands and items would then be mass reproduced and commercialised as, for example, exotic key chains by factories in China. Such situations threaten to replicate the kind of cultural misappropriation and subsequent disempowerment these source communities have suffered for centuries.

Their concerns about cultural appropriation raise several ethical questions around digitising these items. Interestingly, no interlocutor explicitly opposed digitising museum collections as a way of limiting their circulation among “non-Zulus.” Nor did they suggest the digital version might assume any of the original item’s power in the case of the medicine containers or other items associated with a *sangoma* or *inyanga*. Dr Miya, for example, while concerned that certain powerful items were housed incorrectly in museums, or shouldn’t be there in the first place, was unperturbed by the idea of these items being photographed and those images shared. The Groutville participants told me that the Zulu culture is very open and so they have no problem allowing people to see their material culture, even if there are stricter protocols about who can handle and use certain items (Groutville workshop, December 9, 2016).

While this may be true for the specific items we discussed during our workshops, some conversations did hint at levels of secrecy surrounding Indigenous knowledge systems in South Africa. During our first break at the Dundee workshop, for example, and following our discussion about the “medicine container,” Leveridg told me about “another very spiritual item,” a Venda drum. He learnt about it from his father. This drum has been stored in a wet cave for many years. When it reaches a point of almost total disintegration, its guardians make a new one but, as Leveridg explains, “to them it’s the same drum” because the spirit of the original is ceremonially transferred (Dundee workshop, March 30, 2017). In the cave, the new drum sits surrounded by the relics of many old ones. It is an incredibly important item, but “just four or five people even know where it is.”

The group at Eshowe similarly raised issues of secrecy and guardians, this time related specifically to Zulu knowledge systems. Our conversation meandered in this direction towards the end of the day when discussing items, tangible or intangible, that they might include in a self-curated exhibition about their community. After agreeing that their exhibition would be “living” and include a *sangoma*, *indlamu* (a particular form of Zulu dance), and *ingu* (a ceremonial drum), the participants lapsed into an intense conversation in isiZulu. The excerpt below followed this:

- Xulu: We are saying each family has their own very special ancestral song.
 Gibson: OK.
 Xulu: So I don’t think we can exhibit that because it’s not something to exhibit.
 Gibson: OK. Is it something private?
 Xulu: It’s a serious thing.
 Gibson: Is it something you should keep in the family?
 Xulu: Yes, yes.
 Gibson: So if you were doing this just for your family, you might have your ancestral song.
 Xulu: Yes, mmmhmmm.
 [Interlude]
 Gibson: And so all of this Knowledge, how, is it still being carried on? Is it passed on?
 Nxumalo: Yes, it is passed on.
 Xulu: It’s not documented.
 Gibson: How would you feel about it being documented? Or is it not for everybody to know?
 Xulu: I think we need to instil the culture of documentation. Because that’s how we lose this Indigenous knowledge.
 Gibson: But as you say, it’s quite private. The ancestral songs.
 Nxumalo: Even within the families, not everyone knows it. There should only be a specific person in the family [who does].
 (Eshowe workshop 2017)

When I returned to Iziko after this workshop, I did look through the archives to see if there were any documents akin to these ancestral songs, but found nothing. The situation might be different in other museums, however. These conversations emphasise how important it is that originating communities are integral to digitisation projects from the very beginning. Ken Chisa and Ruth Hoskin’s (2014, 79) research similarly uncovered deep dissatisfaction in South Africa that DISA’s “database software included no functionality to restrict access to ‘sorrow’ or ‘culturally sensitive’ materials” and lacked transparency when digitising Indigenous

materials. There are potentially numerous ethical concerns about which items should be digitised and how they should be made available without compromising issues of ownership or access protocols. Moreover, as Xulu's remark about instilling a culture of documentation to avoid losing Indigenous knowledge suggests, given their documentation and preservation skills, museums in South Africa could play a very positive role in this process, providing the originating community dictates access protocols to this knowledge.

7.6. Discussion

A history of equating digitisation with heritage theft in South Africa has meant museums and archives approaching such projects with great trepidation in the aftermath of DISA-Aluka. Far from perceiving technology as playing a meaningful role in decolonising knowledge production, it seemed instead to facilitate neo-colonialism by allowing the Global North unrestricted access to and control over South Africa's history while simultaneously denying South Africans ownership of this valuable resource. Both the FHYA project and Iziko's renewed enthusiasm for digitising and putting online its collections do imply this scepticism has dissipated in very recent years. Once again, digitisation is being seen as a way for museums to reach and engage productively with new audiences, including South Africans. Certainly, the apparent ubiquity of smartphones and the opportunities they offer to "leapfrog" technology in South Africa makes it almost logical to assume digitising collections is the best way to overcome barriers to physically accessing the collections. Pursuing this line of thought, once the digital database is built, there are few reasons anyone cannot come and engage with their (digitised) material culture.

Yet, as I have argued in Chapter 5, simply digitising and putting ethnographic collections and catalogues online potentially replicates normalised colonial knowledge systems. Revealing the constructed nature of this knowledge is an essential first step towards recognising alternative ontologies that privilege different kinds of narratives about objects and collections. My findings discussed in Chapter 6 suggest that working closely with descendent communities can potentially produce these multivocal knowledges about objects in ways that deconstruct a dominant, colonial narrative about "primitive, timeless and unchanging" Indigenous societies (Hamilton and Leibhammer 2016a, 14). The FHYA project is certainly a conscious attempt to deconstruct colonial archives by liberating items from institutional silos

and challenging their categories and classifications. Moreover, their interactive database intentionally creates space to produce multivocal knowledge in a digital space. In this sense, the project seems to admirably overcome numerous hurdles. What my findings suggest, however, is that creating these digital spaces is not always synonymous with removing barriers to accessing them, especially among descendent communities.

Despite heartening statistics about increased Internet access in South Africa, my research suggests that a digital divide persists in several forms. For many of my interlocutors, poor Internet infrastructure outside the urban centres, debilitating data costs, and literacy and linguistic barriers make “going online” and engaging with the content a challenge. Data is a particularly valuable resource and people in these communities make careful decisions about how they use and conserve it; assuming that people will prioritise visiting an online museum collection, simply because they can, is untenable. The older generation, in particular, seems either reluctant or less able to access this kind of digitised knowledge without additional motivation. This matters because these elders are the bearers of important alternative knowledges silenced by colonialism. Without their engagement, decolonising collections is less possible. Unless museums make a realistic assessment of these on-the-ground realities and subsequently work to address them, digitising their collections threatens to further marginalise descendent communities from their material culture.

But there is still reason to be optimistic about technology playing a meaningful role in decolonising knowledge production. As well as revealing localised barriers to accessing digital knowledge, this closer assessment of a digital landscape in KZN also points to opportunities. Most significantly, my research indicates that people, both young and old, *are* interested in engaging with their heritage and embrace opportunities to do so. Significant numbers do have digital tools that make access possible and wish to engage with digital databases. The younger generation makes significant use of Facebook and chooses to use valuable data to access this site. If museums harness this enthusiasm and work with their communities’ existing realities, engagement and subsequent dialogue is more likely. At the same time, museums must be cognisant that digitisation projects, such as the FHYA, will probably provoke difficult conversations about cultural appropriation. In the context of decolonisation in South Africa, these are essential discussions for museums.

8. Chapter 8 – Conclusions

8.1. Introduction

Buthelezi describes decolonisation work as necessarily “slow” and “painstaking” (McKaiser, Wright, and Buthelezi 2017). It is work that demands looking deeper into the past and refiguring the language we use when speaking about it (Buthelezi 2016). It means overcoming a “paralysis of perspective,” Mamdani’s (1996, 3) phrase for explaining the way colonial thinking frames everything in terms of opposites, and a notion that means African people can still be seen as having “no history” (Buthelezi 2016, 587). Reframing these histories requires much more than token inclusions of “otherness” (McNulty 2011, Spivak, Landry, and MacLean 1996a). It requires, as Tuhiwai Smith (1999), Mudimbe (1988), and Chakrabarty (2008) argue, first revealing the repressive strategies, rules of practice, and epistemological order for constructing knowledge about the “other.” Only then can we recognise the vast amount of work that went into stabilising this knowledge so that it appears entirely normal and natural in the first place (Lampland and Star 2009a, Stoler 2016).

Considered within the broader field of postcolonial studies and decolonisation work, this thesis focuses on revealing a very particular set of rules: how museum cataloguing, classifying, and collecting practices constructed Indigenous African cultures, specifically Zulu, as “other” at the South African Museum. A significant portion of this thesis involved slowly and painstakingly tracing the South African Museum’s cataloguing, classifying, and collecting processes to reveal a deeply embedded and persistent colonial epistemology in this institution’s documentation systems. Exposing these through a combination of archival interrogation and fieldwork with descendent communities likewise demonstrates how and why these insidious practices persist in the post-colonial period, and what implications they have for South African museums committed to decolonising knowledge, to producing multivocal narratives and reclaiming histories. More than this, it discloses how certain tools, specifically the catalogue cards, obscure or “blackbox” (Latour 1999) the constructed nature of this knowledge so that it comes to be accepted as a Foucauldian type truth. Specifically, I show how reimagining museum catalogues and classification systems is an essential part of the decolonisation process, a fact that has been too often overlooked in digitisation projects that accept them simply as sources of objective metadata.

While the situated nature of knowledge and the ways it produces Indigenous people as different has been explored elsewhere in museums in the USA, Canada, Europe, Australia and New Zealand in particular (Sherman 2008, Srinivasan et al. 2009, Sleeper-Smith 2009, Turner 2015a, Rowley 2010, Macdonald 2006b, Karp and Lavine 1991, Bennett 2006, Harrison, Byrne, and Clarke 2013, Silverman 2015), this issue has received little detailed interest in South Africa since independence (Davison 1990, Coombes 1994) in terms of information structures, making this thesis a valuable contribution to a (re)emerging field (Hamilton and Leibhammer 2016c, b). My research offers a detailed study of one material culture collection within a single institution, but its value lies in its implications for other decolonisation projects in South African museums that begin with investigating the catalogue. As Turner (2015b) states, we cannot change our practice without first understanding how it is done and how engrained it is in daily practice. My contribution to this field is considering how we might change these practices in museums in South Africa, which is a place that has received far less attention than other colonised countries in this regard. Given the breadth of the SAM's influence in Southern Africa during the twentieth century, I suggest there are other museums in this geographical region that will benefit from similarly interrogating and deconstructing their museum cataloguing, classifying, and collecting practices.

Moreover, I locate my inquiry within a specifically digital context, since digitisation is too frequently framed as synonymous with transformation (Gibson and Turner 2012, Iziko Museums of South Africa 2014a, Taylor and Gibson 2016). My argument is that, like more established museum practices, this process of digitally producing and disseminating knowledge in these spaces must be similarly interrogated to avoid replicating and reinforcing colonial relationships of exclusion and marginalisation. As such, this thesis offers a unique examination of the digital landscape for certain descendent communities in KZN and emphasises how important it is that we understand the broader social and cultural context shaping this.

Museums must investigate thoroughly and work with these on-the-ground user realities so that these voices are equally foregrounded, not further marginalised or merely included as token gestures of “otherness.” One of the most pertinent contributions of this research to the fields of Museum Studies, Digital Anthropology

and Digital Humanities is exposing the number of assumptions we must challenge and the vast amount of work, often analogue, that we must first perform to produce alternative knowledge in digital form. Digitising the SAM documentation as it currently stands does not itself intrinsically decolonise knowledge by making it immediately accessible, inclusive, and engaging, despite well-intentioned aims to do so. Technology alone cannot engineer a solution to this problem.

Against the backdrop of GRAP-103, which assigns financial value to all heritage assets, and a renewed interest in a national digitisation policy, this work is increasingly urgent. My research is designed to move beyond simply problematising these practices to also propose other ways of working with a descendent community in this digital age without reinforcing marginalisation and exclusion, either through the knowledge production process or its management and dissemination. This reveals further gaps in the archive but, in doing so, simultaneously exposes opportunities for producing knowledge that is multivocal and challenges the museum's former authority without simply subverting it; in short, it contributes towards an ongoing process of decolonisation that begins with the museum catalogue.

Interrogating these practices isn't purely academic. In South Africa, Buthelezi (2016, 590) believes that deeply embedded colonial ideas are perpetuated in the terms and categories we still use when describing people and societies, and that these frame how we address such urgent, present-day issues as redressing land claims. My thesis findings make a contribution towards thinking about how exactly we can work towards reframing these, beginning with the museum catalogue, by rethinking how museums work with descendent communities and employing technology more effectively.

After reaffirming the major results of my thesis, as related to my core research questions, which I theorised and framed in Chapter 2, I discuss the limitations of my research as a caveat to offering recommendations for museums, policy makers, and funding bodies in the final section of this thesis.

8.2. Research Results

8.2.1. Constructing Exclusive Narratives

My first research question asked, *“Did South African museums document ethnographic material culture in a way that constructs a specific narrative about Indigenous cultures? If so, what is this narrative and how is it constructed?”*

Maintaining the postcolonial feminist standpoint that I developed during my literature review, whereby knowledge is both situated and contextual, both my historical archival research and fieldwork suggest that the answer to the first part of this question is a definitive yes.

The narrative constructed by the SAM about Indigenous people in Africa was one of timeless, primitive cultures, of groups that could only be understood as lesser opposites, as “other” within a colonial epistemological framework. While my research is limited to the SAM, this institution’s influence on the cataloguing and classifying practices of other ethnographic and anthropological museums in the region—the Africana Museum, the Transvaal Museum, the McGregor Museum, the Albany Museum, the National Museums and Monuments of Rhodesia, the State Museum in Windhoek, and National Museum in Bloemfontein—was significant, leading me to conclude that my results will apply more widely.

The narrative told is a singular narrative, yet—constructed through seemingly prosaic cataloguing and classifying processes, and recorded on apparently banal cards and registers—it became normalised as the only narrative. Like the museum’s current digital database, these information objects obscure the many decisions made about what information should be included, and what information could be left out, so that the final product gives the impression of neutrality. It was only by interrogating the SAM archive and conducting fieldwork with descendent community members that the extent of these exclusions became clear and, simultaneously, the significant work that went into enacting them. For Miss Shaw, recording the object number, English name and tribe was imperative for producing a valuable catalogue card. She did, of course, build upon many other decisions made by her predecessors about how to classify and record collected items in earlier accession registers, but Miss Shaw was the first to standardise and stabilise this system (Davison 1990). Consequently, the SAM catalogue cards were arranged accordingly with this “most important” information recorded prominently at the top.

This information unabashedly serves the SAM's interests in a colonial setting, whereby even van Warmelo's notion of tribe, employed by Miss Shaw, is itself a complicated colonial construct.

What my fieldwork reveals is that, given an opportunity to catalogue their own material culture, Zulu community members would make quite different decisions about which information should be prioritised, as discussed at length in Chapter 6. The item's colour, what and whether it possesses agency, how it sounds, its isiZulu name(s), where it is made, and its potentially hierarchical relationship with other items are all significant information fields that an alternative catalogue should equally foreground. These decisions made by the community are more than "add ons" to existing information and instead require significant epistemological and ontological shifts. Moreover, a truly alternative catalogue, as I discuss below, must go further than incorporating new information fields and relationship structures: it must take an alternative *form* that addresses very real language and literacy issues, which make "Western" style text-based databases problematic.

There is also no evidence in the catalogue cards regarding the ways personal staff preferences shaped the collections. Thus, the many "Zulu" baskets and pots in this collection imply their significance to this community. Miss Shaw's correspondence, however, divulges the many difficulties she had in procuring these items since they were not, in fact, prevalent when she was first collecting. Nor do these records bear information about dubious collecting practices, for which the "sweatscraper" is an obvious example. Stripped of its detailed provenance by the cataloguing system, it is more difficult to reconstruct its history and disclose that it was collected from a dead "Zulu," killed in battle. Through conversations with staff at Iziko and descendent community members, I became increasingly cognisant that this fact might alter the community's perception of the object and, consequently, how it should be treated by and within the museum. As the sweatscraper, *ukhamba*, and medicine container—items Dr Miya and others identified as "powerful"—suggest, these classifying and cataloguing systems likewise obscure the possibility of alternative ontologies since all objects are manifestly presented as inert and unmediated, which is quite contrary to the results of my fieldwork.

Most telling in terms of answering my question about *how* this narrative is constructed is Miss Shaw's code for authenticating information. Her simple A–K code is perhaps the most obvious example of a colonial belief that Indigenous people are incapable of knowing and representing themselves. Nowhere in this system is the “source community” or equivalent considered a trusted repository of knowledge. Although littered across the paper catalogue cards, these letters are absent from the more recent digital database records. Their exclusion is another way museums continue obscuring their decision-making processes, this time through their digital practices. Albeit deeply problematic, where Miss Shaw's code does appear on the catalogue cards, we can, once we know how to interpret the code, at least see that a human decision has been made about the information's value. Ultimately, this hints at its constructed and subjective nature and, importantly, opportunities for conceiving of different constructions; excluding this admission in digital form simply sanitises the information further as it is moved into another standardised museum information system.

My focus on historical cataloguing practices means my approach to developing alternative systems differs from many of the projects discussed in my case studies chapter. Both the Zuni AAMHC and Ara Iritija projects, for example, are primarily concerned with looking forwards to conceive of catalogues constructed purely on descendent community terms. They are not as explicitly engaged with interrogating the shifts and changes in cataloguing these collections previously. What my research suggests is that an alternative catalogue should also accommodate these historical practices since they unquestionably demonstrate the very constructed nature of all knowledge, a conclusion that opens avenues for thinking about knowledge production as an ongoing process rather than something that is either colonial or Indigenous.

8.2.2. Documenting Different Narratives

Recognising that the SAM's former ethnographic collections, classifications and catalogues are highly constructed within a colonial epistemology rather than being natural or neutral does indeed mean understanding that the narrative they present is just one version. This instinctively opens possibilities for constructing different narratives. These findings allowed me to broach my second research question, *Is it possible to (re)construct alternative knowledge about Indigenous cultures by*

differently documenting this material culture? If so, how? My interest is not in documenting a purely counter-narrative, one that simply reacts against the museum's existing knowledge systems. As Fanon ([1967] 2017), Soyinka (1990), Said ([1993] 1994), Mudimbe (1988), Mamdani (1996), and, more recently, Mbongeseni Buthelezi (2016) all counsel, doing this persists in framing a dialectical understanding of the world of Africa versus Europe. This also means recognising that a single, coherent "descendent community" decision on how to document differently is unlikely; as Spivak (1996a, 305) articulates, groups are rarely "unfractioned" and perceiving them as such risks lapsing into an essentialising colonial mindset. A truly *alternative* knowledge must be multivocal and must accommodate the museum's colonial narrative while simultaneously exposing the constructed nature and inherent weaknesses of *all* narratives.

Where the digital space seems to offer possibilities for alternative documentation is in its potential capacity to accommodate multiple fields and facilitate different links between them so that they reveal the ways museum practices constructed knowledge and then reorganise it in ways that contest the museum's former authority. Being able to reorganise information means no longer adhering to a structure that presents and prioritises information according to Miss Shaw's preferences, preferences that reflect and reiterate a latent colonial epistemology. Equally significant with respect to my fieldwork findings, is the possibility of producing multilingual versions of the information that challenges the hegemony of the English language, an issue discussed at greater length in both Chapters 6 and 7.

There is certainly potential in terms of being able to differently document material cultures. My research results suggest that descendent communities possess significant knowledge about items held in the SAM collection that is not recorded in the current, standardised systems; nor do these systems include the kinds of categories or classifications necessary for recording this kind of information in the first place. Engaging with this knowledge opens avenues to rethink the categories and classifications used by the museum and to reconsider how it structures both its collections and the associated information that produces knowledge about them. Chapter 6 considers the particular alternative categories and classifications that the SAM might consider employing if it is serious about foregrounding Zulu descendent

community perspectives in their documentation, what Srinivasan et al. (2009) term the museum's permanent level of knowledge production.

Likewise, questioning whether such items as the "puzzle" and doll are, in fact, "Zulu" challenges the museum's former authority on this matter. Allowing an item to possess multiple different isiZulu names that vary from one region, or even generation, to another, disrupts a colonial notion of a coherent, timeless "Zulu" tribe. Building links between *izikhetho* and *izinkhamba* that include them as part of a wider assemblage tells us more about the highly significant beer drinking ceremonies. It is these links that reflect an Indigenous ontology, whereby some items become more valuable through these connections than they might be as separate entities. Linking items like an older *hlokoloza* or *ukhamba* from the collection with digital images and information about more recently produced versions likewise challenges a colonial notion of immutable Indigenous cultures. Recognising that the shape and colour of items, such as the *ukhamba* or beads on a medicine container, isn't merely incidental or decorative for some Zulu communities is important.

Acknowledging that most people will never possess the knowledge to interpret these features in the same ways descendent communities do, but also that this makes the knowledge no less valuable, is significant. Similarly, an alternative system would recognise that items cannot always be classified as inert, that some possess agency and power that is mediated and distributed within Indigenous ontologies.

Furthermore, these items shouldn't be accessed or handled haphazardly. Equally significant in terms of dismantling this narrative of a timeless, ahistorical culture is my conclusion that museums resume collecting, but in partnership with descendent communities acting as co-curators to redress the historical power imbalances.

Incorporating these new categories as central to a documentation system, rather than making the information an "add on," allows people to curate their knowledge in line with their ontologies, a situation that has a more profound long-term effect in the museum than offering space to curate an exhibition that is displayed for only a limited time.

The second part of this question, the *If so, how?*, also demands a more practical response. My combined archival research and fieldwork approach deconstructed the existing documentation so as to reveal it as constructed, which, consequently makes

it possible to conceive of other, alternative ways of reconstructing it. Doing this also exposes elements of different stories that survived the various standardising and sanitising classification and cataloguing practices; for example, opportunities to imagine the influence Mrs Nxumalo played in shaping what went into the collection, or understanding that people in Zululand resisted collectors' attempts to procure special, "dense" (Weiner 1994, 394) items, such as milk pails, or gaining greater insights into the specific biographies of some items, like the "sweatscraper," before they entered the SAM. The fieldwork element, specifically the workshop discussions, probed these possibilities further.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to suggest that there is any single model for practically producing such alternative knowledge. What I do conclude, based on my fieldwork, is that museums need to think differently about how they work with descendent communities to do this. Many of my interlocutors had limited financial means and while I did cover the cost of refreshments and transport, I believe paying the participants for their time at the rate of a museum researcher is a more effective way of redressing the kinds of long-standing power imbalances between museums and communities that Tuhiwai Smith (1999) and Sleeper-Smith (2009) highlight. Other, similar power imbalances are perpetuated by conducting workshops and interviews in English, and museums should instead operate in whatever language the community prefers. Making the workshops social events that allow communities to discuss concerns other than museum issues is another way of disrupting historical power inequalities. My ultimate conclusion, in this respect, is that museums can no longer simply theorise this issue of alternative narratives or work within their own, comfortable environment, or on their terms; they must concede authority to the community and accept the risks this entails if they are serious about working respectfully with their communities in ways that overcome a historical relationship of mistrust.

8.2.3. Digital Decolonisation

The answer to my third research question, *Can technology play a meaningful role in this process of decolonising knowledge in South African Museums?* is a more tentative yes and an area that certainly requires further research. What my research does conclude is that technology alone cannot provide solutions to the historical problems of colonialism that are embodied in the catalogue and classifications. This

approach must be combined with the more “analogue” work I advocate in Chapters 5 and 6, work that depends on archival research, interviews with practitioners and community members, workshops conducted in the field, participant observation, and PAR.

Digital spaces undoubtedly offer possibilities for holding, as well as revealing, multivocal narratives, which is an important step towards decolonising knowledge. Rather than simply replicating existing information, if carefully constructed, digital catalogues might simultaneously expose and disrupt rigid classification and cataloguing systems. Digital platforms like the FHYA offer possibilities for differently prioritising knowledge so that information given by the originating community isn’t merely an “add on,” but is foregrounded in the knowledge production process. That they can accommodate information in different mediums, not just text, means opportunities to incorporate sound files and videos into a catalogue record, to produce a catalogue that is alternative in form, not just content. This does more than make the object interactive and exciting: as Xulu pointed out, knowing what sound the *ukhamba* makes when it is struck allows her to judge its quality, and recording the process of making the item is a chance to preserve vanishing IKS, both information that the originating community considers important. There is also a chance to reorder how information appears on the screen so that it better reflects these priorities, unlike Miss Shaw’s catalogue card arrangement. And, while far from straightforward, digital databases, as the case studies discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 and other projects demonstrate (Christen 2006, Morphy 2015, Brown and Nicholas 2012, Ngata, Ngata-Gibson, and Salmond 2012, Were 2014), can regulate and limit access to items and information that better mirror Indigenous protocols. Understanding what and how important these protocols are to Indigenous communities in South Africa does, of course, require further research.

My concern is, however, in assuming that developing digital systems that deconstruct and reconstruct knowledge will be of benefit to the descendent communities as well as the museum, that they will actually allow the community to better access and engage with their material culture in new ways that reflect the multivocal nature of knowledge. Debates about a digital divide in South Africa have certainly been countered in more recent years by discussions around the possibilities of leapfrogging technology, largely using cell phones (Breckenridge 2014, Rosenthal

2017). But other research (World Wide Worx 2017) suggests grave inequalities exist between groups in South Africa, with those historically marginalised communities, such as this descendent community—primarily Black and nonurban—still less likely to access and use technology than other groups. If the originating community cannot, or does not, have easy access to digital tools and the Internet, my argument is that technology cannot play a truly *meaningful* role in decolonising knowledge.

Answering this particular question meant carefully probing the particular digital landscapes that these descendent community members inhabit so that I could understand what challenges and opportunities they might offer. While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to produce a full and comprehensive portrait of this landscape for all Indigenous communities, my research was designed to illustrate some of these challenges and opportunities as a way of highlighting how important it is that museums consider these issues when structuring their digital practices. My findings, developed through a combination of participant observation, semi-structured interviews with practitioners and academics, workshop discussions, particularly those held in conjunction with the FHYA, and follow-up evaluations, certainly suggest that encouraging and facilitating engagement with even the most inclusive, self-consciously postcolonial digital databases demands more than just making them available online for this descendent community. The entire system design, from the way metadata is structured to access protocols to decisions made about whether information is shared as text, through audio, or pictorially, and in which languages must be informed by the descendent communities from the very outset of any digitisation project.

Ensuring that the community can get online, should they wish, is equally significant. Internet access remains a challenge in Groutville, Eshowe and Ulundi and, I speculate, is likely a problem in other parts of the country that are similarly located outside the major urban centres. Few places have fixed Internet connections and even those that do, such as the Luthuli Museum, find the connection too slow or intermittent to support more heavyweight systems or interaction that depends on downloading and uploading digital files. Mobile Internet is a possibility—most of my interlocutors do possess cell phones—but patchy cell phone reception in some areas means this is also challenging. More than this, South Africa's high data costs certainly discourage many of the descendent community members from spending

long periods of time browsing the Internet and certainly from “burning data” to upload or download information, as digital databases like FHYA demands. I argue that the significance of these findings lies in appreciating the complex digital landscapes that descendent communities must navigate and how these might reinforce old models of exclusion, especially amongst older generations, those recognised as important bearers of cultural knowledge.

My findings also illuminate other potential issues associated with making material culture available in digital form that might, in fact, mean museums undermine attempts to decolonise their collections. Cultural appropriation is a serious concern for these communities, who have already experienced the negative economic, social, and cultural impact of their important items being seized, misused, replicated and resold to the benefit of other, more economically powerful groups. Distributing knowledge more widely on a digital platform risks exacerbating this situation. At the same time, if the descendent community is involved in the database’s design from the start, there is potential for them to exert greater control over how their digitised culture is distributed and managed. Once again, there is no straightforward answer to how digitisation might impact the community in this respect; rather, there is a need to be cognisant of these concerns and to address them from the outset.

8.3. Research Limitations

This section identifies the most significant limitations of my research, assesses their potential impact, and attempts to justify some of the choices I made during my research. One limitation, albeit largely unavoidable for this PhD study, was my principal role in the research design and process. I do not identify as part of the Zulu descendent community, nor am I South African. I am also part of an academy notorious for historically appropriating Indigenous knowledge and I will be associated with the colonial status quo. Yet, as Denzin, Lincoln, and Tuhiwai Smith (2008), Said ([1993] 1994) and Jørgensen (2010) suggest, non-Indigenous researchers working with marginalised groups can play a role in decolonising the academy and, as Harding (2004) posits, people can learn to use perspectives other than their own so that critical knowledge is not the exclusive domain of marginalised groups. My status as a white foreigner certainly had both conceptual and practical implications for my work but by invoking several participatory action research

methods in my design with the intention of treating community members as co-collaborators I went some way towards ameliorating this limitation.

My outsider status also meant relying on gatekeepers to access community members in KZN, a situation that presents numerous issues (University of Tartu 2016). For my fieldwork, this meant drawing on my existing network of contacts in the province. There are obvious ethical issues associated with this, primarily that the museum staff I contacted might feel obliged to provide participants for my workshops out of a sense of obligation to me. I addressed these concerns in my ethical review (see Appendix 4) and did reiterate to participants that their presence was entirely voluntary. I also attempted to lessen my reliance on the museums by providing notices for display in the community; however, since I was not physically present in the locations during the recruitment process, I did rely heavily on the KZN museums to spread word about the workshop and then collect RSVPs. I do propose possible ways of overcoming this dilemma in the following recommendations chapter but also acknowledge that this participant portfolio may have affected my results, even if I cannot assess the full extent of this.

I also depended on translators and interpreters, both during and after the workshop sessions. I did invest time in learning isiZulu, and being able to use this to introduce myself and hold informal conversations certainly helped with establishing trust and rapport. However, the topics we discussed meant conversations often lapsed into “deep Zulu” and I doubt I would fully grasp all nuances as an outsider, even if I were highly proficient in isiZulu. I considered employing a simultaneous interpreter for the workshop sessions but, due to limited availability and finances, I did not. In most cases, one or more participants became self-appointed interpreters. I also video recorded the sessions and employed third-party translators to transcribe the isiZulu sections soon after the workshops were complete (Appendix 2). This system was not flawless. As the transcript from Ulundi revealed, some information was still lost in translation and my instructions mistakenly conveyed, which certainly impacted data. And although native or fluent isiZulu speakers, the third-party translators were often from different regions of KZN and admitted experiencing some difficulties translating less familiar terms. One possible benefit, however, of not having a simultaneous translator was a more natural flow to the workshop and a chance to focus on observing nonverbal communication when discussions continued in isiZulu.

I would, however, advise in future that a local isiZulu speaker facilitate these kinds of workshops and interviews.

Conducting the workshops within local KZN museums did overcome some of the more practical challenges sometimes associated with working in less urban areas, especially those with limited power and water. I designed my workshops around possible power outages and, while water shortage was an issue in Eshowe, all venues offered clean, well-lit and sufficiently comfortable places for the participants. Some of the spaces were more conducive than others to establishing egalitarian seating plans and accommodating breakaway groups. Ideally, I would have organised participants in a U-shaped formation for large group sessions but also set up separate tables for the breakaway sessions; however, in most cases, space and furniture did not permit this. Perhaps a more significant conceptual limitation is that the museum space is far from neutral (Karp and Lavine 1991, Karp, Kreamer, and Lavine 1993, Karp et al. 2006), an argument taken up with increased vehemence in recent months (Sentance 2018, Murawski 2017, Herz 2017, Rodriguez 2017). This, exacerbated by participants perceiving me as a representative for museums, likely influenced the kind of data collected. As revered settings, a point made by Groutville workshop participant Luhlongwane, museums are not necessarily welcoming places that put participants at the kind of ease that would prompt them to share the same ideas they might in another more familiar space. Again, it is difficult to assess objectively how far this limits my findings, but I am cognisant that it possibly had an impact on them.

8.4. Significance of the Findings

Hidden from public view and stripped of more obviously offensive details, the catalogue cards survived the SAM's postindependence transformation process, despite being deeply imbued with a colonial epistemology. Interrogating and deconstructing the museum's various documentation processes unequivocally demonstrates the ways they produced a particularly colonial way of knowing and ordering Indigenous cultures. Moreover, they still inform decisions about what information is digitised and how items are known and valued in the postcolonial era, for example about what information is digitised or the financial value of an item during a GRAP-103 audit. This situation is testament to how successful colonialism was in neutralising, sanitising, and normalising its knowledge production practices. As South African institutions face growing pressure to decolonise, grand gestures,

such as removing Rhodes statue from the steps of UCT, are certainly significant, but they alone cannot change foundational knowledge-making practices.

What my thesis proposes is a different way of working with communities to produce this alternative knowledge, whereby the community members are respectfully treated as co-investigators and co-curators, rather than simple contributors. At the same time, revealing the constructed nature of the collections and catalogues does expose possibilities for developing alternative, multivocal narratives, many of which have roots in the archive itself. Conducting fieldwork with the descendent communities further demonstrates how constructed and exclusive is the museum's narrative, since the many findings offer glimpses of other knowledge, either ignored or unknown by the museum, as well as of alternative ways of prioritising information and items and of different ontologies altogether.

In revealing and challenging the constructed nature of core museum practices, both analogue and digital, my thesis is a contribution to foundational level decolonisation work that perceives the current catalogue and classifying practices as a problem. Undertaking this work in the digital age means confronting the persistent relics of the past produced by these processes without replicating the same kinds of exclusionary and marginalising relations that permeate them. The digital museum is not a simple, utopian solution to these problems.

Digital spaces do, however, seem to offer opportunities for reflecting the multivocal nature of knowledge by allowing us to document differently and reveal the rules that once dictated how we did this, a first step towards decolonisation that goes beyond replicating, in digital form, an insidious colonial epistemology. But this alone is not enough to ensure technology can play a meaningful role in the decolonisation process. Unless we are cognisant of the realities descendent communities face when encountering and using technology, particularly the older generations, it is unlikely that bearers of cultural knowledge will be able to assume authority over how their culture is digitally represented, managed and disseminated, a situation that mirrors old colonial models of exclusion. More than this, my research is significant in proposing that a truly alternative digital catalogue must take a different form as well as having different content. This means moving away from wholly text-based databases and considering solutions that foreground audio and visual information in

other languages more in line with the descendent communities' preferences and, quite possibly, working across platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook that community members already use on their own terms.

Museum digital practices can too easily and unthinkingly reproduce normalised colonial relations between institution and descendent communities, both in terms of what information is digitised and how this is disseminated. Where this research has value is in simultaneously demonstrating a still-urgent need to decolonise knowledge production in South African museums and in offering possible ways to harness digital structures and tools that *do* challenge the colonial narrative without simply countering it, that *do* take Indigenous ontologies seriously, and that *do* empower descendent communities to engage with, organise, and represent their knowledge on their terms.

This is ongoing work; it is impossible to imagine a point where a museum suddenly discovers itself *decolonised*. While there is no subsequent and obvious endpoint for this research, the very process of dismantling, of decolonising the past in museums does have broader ramifications. In itself, this type of work does not address or tackle the persistent wealth and power inequalities that are colonialism's legacy in South Africa. What it might do, as Buthelezi (2016) hopes, is contribute towards employing different terms and categories when describing people and societies that more helpfully reframe how we think about redistributing wealth or redressing land claims in the future.

9. Chapter 9 – Recommendations

Given that I chose to include PAR as one of my research methods, this final chapter addresses the need for action at the heart of this approach. As outlined in Chapter 4, PAR emphasises pursuing practical solutions beneficial to the marginalised communities with which researchers work. One of my conclusions in the preceding chapter is that neither museums nor the academy can justify only theorising colonialism's many legacies in isolation from the affected descendent communities. This chapter, intended for museum managers, funders, and policy makers, offers some suggestions that are more practical and applied as well as other conceptual ideas for future research that might contribute towards the broader decolonisation project in South Africa's museums. I discuss these further in the succeeding sections and conclude with a summary of recommendations.

9.1. Further Interrogate the Archive(s)

My case study approach does mean my conclusions are largely based on in-depth research on a single collection with one South African museum. This project did, however, entail wider research into the South African Museum's documentation systems, and this suggests that many of the issues I uncovered when interrogating the Natal Nguni collection might equally apply to other items within the museum's former ethnographic collections, for example those once classified as Xhosa or Ndebele. Likewise, and as discussed above, this archive hints at the influence the SAM exerted over other museums in the Southern African region in terms of their cataloguing and classification systems.

I recommend that the Iziko–SAM and other museums established in South Africa prior to independence in 1994 commence a similarly systematic interrogation of their documentation systems related to ethnographic items. I am not suggesting that museums do this as a step towards replacing their existing information with a counter narrative; rather, I propose that they do this as a way of revealing the constructed nature of their current knowledge production processes. This careful examination is, as Buthelezi (2016) argues, an essential part of decolonisation work. It is indeed meticulous and time-consuming and, primarily, analogue, but also necessary if institutions wish to avoid replicating old colonial epistemologies through digital practices. Changing our practices means first understanding how they work and how normalised they are. With this in mind, I recommend that a museum

practitioner familiar with the collections and catalogue systems project manage the archival interrogation but the institution support it as a dedicated research project.

9.2. Foreground Descendent Communities

In Chapter 6, I shared the different priorities, categories, and ways of constructing information suggested by Zulu descendent community interlocutors. Some of these might apply more widely to other collections, specifically the significance of sharing information in Indigenous languages. Others may be more esoteric and particular to certain communities, for example, rules governing access, as explored in the Ara Iritija case study in Chapter 3. What they do suggest, however, is the importance of foregrounding descendent communities in any alternative knowledge-making project around ethnographic collections, and the need for further research into these. By this I mean strengthening connections between the museum and community so that the community members do not operate as outsiders to the museum.

I advocate making community members both part of the archival interrogation project team and ensuring they lead the fieldwork portion of the process so that they can shape the research agenda in line with the descendent community's interests. More significantly, I propose paying community members for their time at the same rate as a museum researcher, as well as covering the costs of transport and refreshments. Given that many descendant community members face challenging financial circumstances, many of which can be traced back to inequalities forged under colonialism, this practice would be one way of redressing this economic imbalance and treating people as equal co-curators.

Many of the limitations incurred in the fieldwork process and discussed above stemmed from my outsider status and links with the academy and colonial status quo. Although there are other power issues associated with using locally based facilitators, such as their own institutional affiliations and perceived allegiances in any community-based disputes, my findings do suggest that using a facilitator knowledgeable in local dialects and customs would better inspire trust, initiate more extended conversations and so collect deeper, more locally resonant data. This is another important step towards blurring divisions between "Museum" and "Community" and decolonising these relations.

Conducting research with a representative chosen from and by the Indigenous community not only overcomes many of the linguistic issues, it also presents possibilities for doing more extensive research, for example, more workshops and interviews in the same location over consecutive weeks, than my research project permitted, since I only made shorter visits to my research sites. Furthermore, I suggest bringing descendent community groups to the museums so that they can interact directly with the tangible items in a style akin to the Smithsonian's *Recovering Voices* initiative. This would also facilitate a greater number of engagements between different objects and community members than my research design permits. I had hoped to incorporate a community visit to Iziko into my own project design, but time constraints and funding limitations made it impossible.³⁶ What I advocate is that these descendent community researchers then take lead roles in designing any subsequent museum digital database so that it reflects their findings on their terms. But whatever form this takes, the digital database must also incorporate the previous information systems to make visible the multivocal nature of knowledge; failing to do so would mean it simply reflects a counter-narrative, paralysing the museum's perspective and trapping it within the same colonial epistemology it hopes to escape.

9.3. Prioritise User Access

One of the most significant findings drawn from researching whether technology can play a meaningful role in this process of decolonising knowledge in South African Museums was that there were benefits of sharing information and items over digital platforms that descendent communities already use. Given that high speed Internet access is not, currently, universally guaranteed, that data is perceived as expensive and valuable, and that digital (and basic) illiteracy is a reality, I recommend museums in South Africa incorporate sharing data across platforms that descendent communities already use as part of their broader digital strategy.

In the immediate aftermath of my data collection, my suggestion was that museums use Facebook since there is a zero version available (<https://0.facebook.com/>) and all

³⁶ In April 2018, Dr Hannah Turner and I successfully applied for a Wenner Gren fund and received USD19,963 to assist with running the workshop "*Amagugu Ethu*/Our Treasures: Understanding Zulu History and Language with Zulu-Speaking Communities and Their Belongings" at Iziko in early 2019. The eight Zulu-speaking participants in this workshop group were all interlocutors for my PhD research in KZN, making this a next step for future research.

digitally competent descendent community members are also part of Facebook's community; however, in light of recent revelations about how the company collects and uses data (Chen et al. 2018, Rosenberg, Confessore, and Cadwalladr 2018), I hesitate to unequivocally recommend this platform. At the same time, this platform does seem the most feasible way of ensuring people can see and, more significantly, be encouraged to interact with their digitised material culture. Attempting to persuade people to burn data or engage with niche museum systems seems less likely. Another feasible solution, proposed by both McNulty and Duggan in the aftermath of our FHYA workshops, is setting up Local Area Networks (LAN) in collaboration with local museums, libraries, and schools. This option would allow communities access to digital collections without burning data, but would mean these other institutions bearing the responsibilities and costs for maintaining the system.

What I suggest is that museums in South Africa and, possibly, elsewhere, conduct far greater research into how people use their digital devices and what barriers there are to accessing digitised collections. My research flags several issues associated with simply making information and images available on a separate, museum-based system but, again, these are specific to this descendent community and the sample size is small. Broadening their relevance and making wider recommendations certainly demands further research in this area.

9.4. Change Collections Management and Conservation Practices

As Bell, Christen, and Turin (2014) and Phillips (2014) suggest, taking Indigenous ontologies seriously means concurrent shifts in display and management practices within museums. It seems unlikely that this decolonisation work can be contained within collecting and documentation practices. Rather, I recommend that practitioners consider this route an opportunity to rethink collections management, preservation and conservation practices related to their former ethnographic collections, as well as their repatriation and return policies. As I discuss in Chapters 6 and 7, some descendent community members expressed concern about the ways powerful items are handled and stored within the museum. Acknowledging these items' agency as part of this process means developing different approaches to their management and recognising that museum preservation and conservation practices may conflict with community ideas about the item's intended biography.

Iziko has commenced research on its collections of human remains and was the first museum in South Africa to produce a formal policy on their care and return (Iziko Museums of South Africa 2017b). However, as Tichmann (pers. comm., April 18, 2018) acknowledges, the museum does not yet have a policy for repatriating or returning unethically collected or questionable items. It is beyond the scope of my thesis to suggest how museums in South Africa approach this issue and I suspect it may require case-by-case consideration.

Engaging with “messy” provenance work is an essential step in this process and something the archival interrogation process initiates. Given colonialism’s efficiency at silencing other narratives and conflating categories and histories, as demonstrated in Chapter 5, as well as the evolving and ever-changing nature of the descendent communities themselves, it is unlikely this provenance work will mean an easy match between item and community. Instead, the process will likely entail more complex conversations around knowledge return and ownership over Indigenous knowledge systems.

Since South Africa was, as Rassool (2015) points out, both coloniser and colonised, these conversations will almost certainly have national significance. South African museums must negotiate a dual role: first as custodians of items unethically collected by internal colonisers; and secondly as custodians agitating for a return of items collected by external colonisers and sent overseas. Consequently, I advocate for a national level policy on repatriation and return, not dissimilar to NAGPRA, but one that permits some flexibility according to collection histories and descendent community wishes. As per recommendation 9.2., Indigenous communities must be involved in every step of this policy making process.

9.5. Keep Collecting

Leibhammer (2016), Kotze (pers. comm., September 14, 2017) and Tichmann (pers. comm., April 18, 2018) all acknowledge a reluctance to engage with old ethnographic collections in South Africa’s postindependence period. This, they agree, is reflected in the items in museum collections and, subsequently in the documentation about collections, which ceased to be produced in the late 1980s. Combined with old collecting practices, this means the collections and catalogues persist in telling a colonial story of timeless Indigenous African cultures. Without “modern” versions of such items as the *hlokoloza* or Chinese-manufactured, plastic

izinkhamba, these collections have “missing chapters” from their histories. The collections do not reflect a sense of evolving continuity with cultures, nor do they contribute to more recent narratives about the impact of changing global politics and economics on these communities. My final recommendation is thus an insistence that museums start collecting again, that they augment these collections rather than leave them alienated and neglected as Hamilton and Leibhammer (2016a) suggest they currently are. Of course, unlike earlier collecting practices and in line with my previous recommendations, decisions about what enters the collection and how these items are subsequently documented cannot be initiated without the descendent community.

9.6. Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation One: The Iziko–SAM and other museums established in South Africa prior to independence in 1994 commence a similarly systematic interrogation of their documentation systems related to ethnographic items.

- I recommend that a museum practitioner familiar with the collections and catalogue systems project manage the archival interrogation but the institution support it as a dedicated research project.
- As part of this, museums must engage with messy provenance work that might produce uncomfortable discoveries about items’ provenances.

Recommendation Two: Descendent communities must be partners and leaders in this process and set the terms of engagement at the start of the project.

- I suggest, as part of this, that funding bodies dedicate financial resources to pay descendant community members for their time at the same rate as museum researchers, so that their own research assumes economic value rather than benefitting only the museum.
- I suggest that museums both travel out to descendant communities to conduct research, but also facilitate community visits to the museum. This would also engender a greater number of engagements between different objects and community members than my research design permits.

Recommendation Three: Museums must make the results of these collaborative knowledge production projects available in ways that descendent communities can most easily access.

- I recommend museums in South Africa incorporate sharing data across platforms descendent communities already use as part of their broader digital strategy, specifically Facebook.

Recommendation Four: I recommend that museums and policy makers consider these projects an opportunity to rethink collections management, preservation and conservation practices related to their former ethnographic collections, as well as repatriation and return policies.

- Within this context, South African museums must negotiate a dual role: first as custodians of items unethically collected by internal colonisers; and secondly as custodians agitating for a return of items collected by external colonisers and sent overseas.
- I advocate for a national level policy on repatriation and return, not dissimilar to NAGPRA, but one that permits some flexibility according to collection histories and descendent community wishes.

Recommendation Five: My final recommendation is an insistence that museums start collecting again, that they augment these collections rather than leave them alienated and neglected, as Hamilton and Leibhammer (2016a) suggest they currently are.

- Museum managers should thus incorporate this responsibility into employee's job descriptions and ensure they have both the time and resources to initiate and pursue collecting activities, beginning with a focus on building relationships with descendent communities as partners and co-curators.
- I suggest that funding bodies support such activities by dedicated financial resources that make this possible.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: SAM Object Numbers, Classification and Associated Correspondence

Classification	Object number	Accession year	Tribe or Group	Place	Corres ponde nce no.
Ornaments_Neck	5425	1934	Zulu	Ingwavuma	208
Bag	5831	1937	Zulu	Nongoma	252
Basket	5813	1937	Zulu	Nongoma	252
Basket	5814	1937	Zulu	Nongoma	252
Basket	10016	1937	Zulu	Nongoma	252
Broom	5818	1937	Zulu	Nongoma	252
Ladle	5816	1937	Zulu	Nongoma	252
Food Mat	5819	1937	Zulu	Nongoma	252
Spoon	5817	1937	Zulu	Nongoma	252
Strainer	5815	1937	Zulu	Nongoma	252
Pipe & Pipe Bowl	5869	1937		Umhloti	253
Ornaments_Neck	6185	1940	Zulu	Zululand	336
Spear	6647	1947	Hlubi	Basutoland border	409
Ornaments_Neck	7495	1956	Zulu		528
Ornaments_Waist	7492	1956	Zulu		528
Ornaments_Arm, Hand	7538	1956	Zulu or Mpondo		528
Snuff box	7500	1956	Zulu	Natal	528
Spoon	7499	1956	Zulu	Natal	528
Stick	7503	1956	Zulu	Natal	528
Flask	8287	1960			694
Ornaments_Neck	8297	1960			694
Ornaments_Waist	8289	1960			694

Appendix 2: Workshop transcripts

The following transcripts are based on recordings made during the six group workshops. I have transcribed the English language recordings verbatim in these appendices and included English versions of the original isiZulu parts. When quoting participants in the body of my thesis, I have edited the text to ensure the participant's meaning is given in clear English. Many of my participants did not speak English as their home language and I felt that it would undermine the significance of their contributions if I failed to express their intention clearly.

Key:

[...]: Signifies an inaudible word or phrase.

PP: Participant is unidentifiable in the recording.

Appendix 2.1. Groutville Workshop Transcript

Luthuli Museum, Groutville

9th December 2016

Facilitator:	Laura Kate Gibson	(LG)
Participants:	Lungsani Maqhakane	(LM)
	Dumusile Luthuli	(DL)
	Siyabonga Mzobe	(SM)
	Xolani Myeni	(XM)
	Leon Nxumalo	(LN)
	Boyzie Myeni	(BM)
	Nkosikhona Sibisi	(NS)
	Bongeka Tshingana	(BT)
	Zandile Manzini	(ZM)
	Menzi Mthethwa	(MM)
	Meluzi Zulu	(MZ)
	Cebile Dindi	(CD)
	Lindiwe Nyembe	(LNy)
	Thully Gumede	(TG)
	Lungile Dlamini	(LD)
	Nobuso Dind	(ND)
	Nothando Dindi	(NDi)
	Ntsikelelo Dindi	(NtD)
	Group response	(Aud)
	Unidentified participant	(PP)

START

Session: Welcome & Information

LG: Thank you very much everyone. Good to know a little bit more about each other before we start the day. I just want to go through very quickly a few house rules so that we are all in agreement. So just in terms of what we say here, we keep it within the group. You can tell people outside any information but not to name anyone here unless they say that you can so that we have some confidentiality

and some privacy. Just out of courtesy, to let people finish speaking before we interrupt them, and just to speak one person at a time. And to appreciate that what anyone says is of equal value, so there's no wrong answers for anything that's said today. And we'll try and start and end the sessions on time. Just to have, unless we're doing breakaway groups, which we will do quite a lot, to have one conversation going on so that if someone's talking we're all listening to them. And then any criticism or discussion we have will be about the topics we're discussing rather than directing at people, which I think is all just common grounds that you already know. Before we move on to the first set of exercises, there's some forms in front of you which, there's an information sheet here and also a consent form. If I can just ask you to take a few moments, a few minutes to read the information sheet and if you have any questions about it then please ask me, and if there's any language issues then I can also ask Thulani to come and help with that. And then to sign the consent form if you're happy with it. If there's anything you're unhappy with, then feel free to take your biscuits and walk away. That's fine. So I'm just going to give you five minutes to go through that, see if you've got any questions, and if you're happy with that, then I'll collect all the consent forms from you. Thank you.

[Pause while participants read and sign forms]

Session: “What’s this and what’s its story?”

LG: Ok, for the first activity, now that you're in your breakaway groups, what I'm going to do. You've got some postcards in front of you. Anyone doesn't have this let me know and I'll bring them round. I'm going to put it on the board as well. So all of these items that I'm going to show you are in the Iziko Museums of South Africa collection. And I'm not going to tell you anything about them. I'm just going to show you the photo. And what I'd like you to do, in your groups, is to see what you think they are and how they make you feel. So, some of the things you might want to think about are, what is this item, how does this item make you feel, do you like the item, have you seen anything like it before, do you or someone you know own something like this, have you heard about an item like this before, who you think might use this item, and why this item might be important? And anything else about it. Any stories it makes you think of, anything familiar at all. So the first one we're going to look at is this one. Does everybody have one of these? OK here, there we go. I'm going to give you five minutes in your group to have a think about all these things and then we'll feed back to everyone else. Thank you very much.

[Breakaway group discussions]

LG: Ok, right let's start with the group in the corner here. Whatever you think it is, I'm just going to write down. So, what do we think this is? Do you have any ideas?

LM: Some kind of instrument.

LG: Some kind of instrument? OK. Any other thoughts on it?

PP: Maybe a [...]

LG: A what, sorry?

PP: A décor. Something to.

LG: Ah, a decoration. OK.

LM: Part of a necklace.

LG: Part of a necklace, OK. Any other thoughts about this? Did you like it? Have you ever seen anything like this before? No? OK. Anything else you want to say about it? Any other thoughts?

DL: We did like it the first time we saw it.

LG: OK. Thank you very much. OK, I think I gave this group a clue that it's made of wood. Do you have any other thoughts?

SM: Ah no.

(Laughter)

SM: It looks like a music instrument.

LG: A music instrument?

SM: Like a music instrument. It's made of wood and probably the wood is used for clapping against and to make some click sounds. Other than that, we have not seen something like this. It's definitely not South African [...].

LG: Ok, so not South African?

SM: I don't think so.

LG: Thanks very much guys. Thank you. What about this group here? Did you have any thoughts? No?

LN: We talk about it, we think it could be a percussion instrument.

LG: A percussion instrument. OK. And the group in the corner? Our final group, do you have any other thoughts?

PP: Definitely it's a traditional instrument [...] an African musical instrument.

LG: OK. OK, so we're leaning towards the instrument side. And does anyone else have any thoughts on it? Nobody has seen something like this before? Anyone? Shall I tell you what it is?

Aud: Yes.

LG: Or what they think it is at the Museum. So what they have is when it was collected in the 1870s by a man called Mr Dunn. And the information that they have about it in the Museum is that it's a puzzle, a game. And you have to take the wooden pieces off the string. It was apparently collected in Zululand.

PP: Sorry, what is it?

LG: It's a puzzle. A game.

BM: A puzzle.

LG: Well this is just what they had on the records for that, so they might be wrong though.

XM: Who invented it?

LG: I don't know. This is the problem with all the old museum records. I don't know who made it, they didn't take the information who made it, they didn't really take the information about where it was collected. All that they have in the records is the name of the person who collected it. He thought it was a puzzle. Who knows if he's correct. Maybe not, maybe it was a musical instrument. And that's pretty much all you have. And that it was collected in the 1970s. It's interesting that nobody has seen anything like it before.

LN: How big is this thing?

LG: It's about this size. About the size of the pen. Both pieces.

SM: So the game was to maybe untie the knots, take the wood one side, the string one side.

LG: This is what it says in the records. Who knows if that's correct.

SM: It's for kids?

LG: Maybe. But there's no games that you see now that are like this? Or at your grandparents' house?

SM: [...] they could've seen something like that.

LG: Well thank you. That's possibly the most obscure one. I think the next one might be more familiar. OK, so this is our next item. Does anyone not have one? Do you want me to go back to the questions?

Aud: Yes.

LG: OK. So I'll give you five minutes on this and then we'll go through.

[Breakaway group discussions]

LG: Ok [...] do you want your group to star? OK, what do we think this one is?

PP: This is a traditional pot [...]

LG: A traditional beer pot. Ukhamba?

Aud: Yes.

NS: And it can also be for decoration.

LG: OK, anything else you have to share about this? Have you drunk from one before?

NS: Yes, others too.

LG: Drunk, yup. You've used these ones before.

PP: Another thing, it can also be used to store traditional beer [...]

LG: In the corner?

PP: *Umsamo*. It's like a, what's the English word for it, it's a shrine.

LG: Ok, so traditional beer is a shrine? In the corner?

PP: Sometimes they build it outside the house.

LG: And what is it used, for protection?

PP: It's a shrine.

PP2: It's also inside when you leave it over night the ancestors will come and drink it. In fact you don't drink the traditional beer before they drink it first.

LG: OK, so they take it first. Anything else from your group? This is really interesting.

PP: Made with clay.

LG: Thank you very much. Anything else you guys want to share? Ladies? Would this be a pot that men and women would use?

NS: Yes, they probably would. But traditionally, only men drink from it.

LG: Ok.

NS: Yes.

LG: Thanks to your group. OK, what about you guys?

BT: Now in the modern day, ukhamba is made from plastic.

LG: Made of plastic, OK.

BT: Even though before it was made of clay.

LG: And are they quite common the plastic ones?

BT: Quite.

LG: OK. Anything else? Does anyone in your family own something like this?

BT: Yes, I do have.

LG: Ja, you do? OK. Is it one that has been passed down through generations?

BT: Mine is made of plastic. And then it's covered with beads. It's for decoration.

LG: For decoration, OK. So you just have it in your house?

BT: Yes.

LG: Anybody else in your group have anything they want to say about this? Do you like this pot? Is it a good example of ukhamba?

BT: Yes.

Aud: Yes.

PP: [...] But there are different designs.

LG: And would this be a typical Zulu design?

Aud: Yes.

LG: Ok, this group at the back here. Did you have any other thoughts about it at all?

PPFX: [...] A younger person can't drink this beer [...] This is only drunk by other people.

LG: By other people? OK. Any other thoughts from you guys?

DL: Specifically it's being used by a member of the family.

LG: OK [...]

DL: [...] it's kept in the family over night.

LG: Thank you. And what about our last group, do you have anything to add?

ZM: It's very fragile.

LG: Very fragile, OK.

MZ: And it's [...]

LG: OK.

BM: Meaning like it's heritage.

SM: [...]

LG: The last group gets to go first next.

SM: Because now this is probably the one thing that everybody has in their house.

LG: Everything everyone has, OK.

SM: Now the first group answered everything.

(Laughter)

SM: So even if we know the next [...] we're going to say, ja, [...] OK, besides our input on this is ukhamba, it's a clay pot, which is incorrect to say it's a clay pot. It's ukhamba. It's made of clay and as they said it's kept at umsamo [...] beer, isiZulu, together [...] it connects us to our ancestors, to us as a Zulu nation. A home, a house, is not considered full when this is not present. [...] It has to be clay but if you have the plastic one then it's OK, but it's maybe the Chinese version of it.

(Laughter)

LG: Does anyone have any stories about a time when they have drunk from one of these?

SM: Yes.

LG: Would you be happy to share?

SM: The first time I drank sorghum beer was [...] I had some sort of spewing [...] they allowed me to drink from this from a very young age [...] there's a traditional ceremony where you go to where the men are. You have to drink first

to make sure that it's not poison or whatever is inside. You drink before you put it.

LG: This is great. You know there's none of this in their records. It's just, they don't even have ukhamba, it's just a pot. That's pretty much all. It was collected in Utrecht area in 1908, so it's an old pot, old ukhamba. But the person who collected this didn't ask for the story.

[Recording interrupted for remainder of Session 1]

Session: Retelling the Stories

[Breakaway group discussions]

LG: OK everyone, we're going to have the first group, the ukhamba. Do you want me to hold anything up for you? OK, do you want to stand up here? Can everybody see alright? Three minutes. OK!

NS: From this group, our presentation is on traditional Zulu beer. A pot. Ukhamba. It will be a television advert and the theme will say celebrating our African heritage and pride. And the target market will be.

LG: Guys, can we just make sure we're all listening because they've put a lot of work in.

NS: The target market will be ordinary South Africans and people all over the world. Coming to our point, traditional beer pot is made with the strips of clay and [smoking] with the spoon and water. The drying process is called burnishing. And it's decorated with the geometric shapes such as triangles and rectangles. It's specific function is drinking traditional beer during our ceremonies when worshipping our ancestors. It's believed that only men can drink from it and sometimes it is placed there in the corner so that the ancestors will come and drink from it. It is also very fragile and it's believed that if this ukhamba breaks during the ceremony, that function, or that ceremony are being conducted, it's blamed, it doesn't [...]

LG: Thank you, big hand. So we've got the ukhamba, it's going to be a television advert presented during heritage month to all of South Africa and everyone else around the world. Thank you guys, that's brilliant. OK, tough act to follow. Who's up next? Shall we have the grain storage? Who's going to be your spokesperson?

BT: We all are.

LG: You all are? That's perfect, that's great. Do you want to [...]?

MM: Afternoon. My name is Menzi Mthethwa. They call me crazy boy. I like to make my presentation with my home language. I am an author and I used to write in isiZulu and I like to speak isiZulu. As for now [...] we do what we see here at the front. We sell isibhokisiha nesitswaninga [...] 'Ingobosi' I will give you the introduction about this. Let's talk about 'ingobosi' because the grandmothers and the old people know what 'ingobosi' is, because they have used this long ago in

the garden, putting in their food, they used it then. So, if I would be asked what an *ingobosi* is, I would know nothing, but now I know. If one would asked somebody my age what it is, s/he would ask 'what is this?'. So, therefore we have to make him / her an *ingobosi* [...] from teenage to young adults. So, my aunts will continue to tell us where one could find the *ingobosi* and how to use this. I would like to stop here.

BT: I would like to greet you too. Like this team I will [...] I will speak in Xhosa and Zulu. So if you don't understand a word, it might be that it is in Xhosa. Because this word 'ingobosi' is used in Xhosa, I don't know whether it is in Zulu too? No, so it is not in Zulu, but it is in Xhosa. When our mothers and grandmothers went to harvest, they used it. They used it initially [...] to my knowledge, but over time, as technology changed, so things change. Some are like and others are like this, like a bottle. Things we are putting in as also not the same anymore. So things changed, we either put in water or juice, but they are not the same 'check'. There are also those, used in rural areas in the houses, bread 'umbawu' that has been made of flour and kneaded and was put into the fire, with the coals on top. This what we call *umbawu*. When the bread is done, it is cut and taken to [...] When there are the small things, which are called, (looking on the paper) which we call *isixawukethu*. I don't know whether one of you know this? 'isixawukethu', yebo *isixawukethu*. I don't know how it is called in English but the Chinese are also using it. When anything is harvested [...] one uses this.

PP: I got [...]

BT: Do you have a question?

PP: [...]

BT: Yes.

PP: [...]

BT: It is made from 'isingcema.' There are things that are grown [...] Thank you.

NDi: I want to talk about [...]

LN: [...]

LG: Thanks guys. OK next group.

PP: This bracelet, this traditional bracelet, is called *ingxotha*. This bracelet, this was made for woman and back in the day they were given by the kings as a present. And to wear at the certain ceremonies. It was given to royal women by the kings to wear at certain ceremonies. This *ingxotha* is made of brass.

[Rest of the presentation is inaudible]

ZM: We are presenting *isigege*. So *isigege* is a traditional belt for tummies. It's actually a band. A waistband. It is made by hand and adorned by beads. So these beads were made by Italians from Italy. Yes. Because back in those days, black people didn't have those kind of beads, so they traded to get what they wanted. OK, and it is worn for adornment. So you only wear it to adorn yourself when

you're going to special occasions. This was made in the 1960s, so you can tell it's really ancient. Made with a type of grass called ingongoni. This type of grass is found in KZN near rivers. In wet places you would find this kind of grass. And it's quality. The quality of this kind of grass, it must last more than five decades, so you can tell how strong it is. This ornament originated in the Zulu culture, but then was adopted by other cultures, like the Ndebeles. When we wear it, like when it's worn, you feel very comfortable. You feel very comfortable when you wear it. It gives shape to the body. And that attracts suitors, people who want to get married to you. You become very attractive. Yes, yes. And it is a natural African fashion because back in those days, obviously, they used to dress traditionally. That is the fashion they knew. There were no pearl bracelets, earrings. And it also stands, even today, in rural places, girls adorning themselves by these beads and these waistbands. So it's price when you sell it to someone, it would be five thousand Rands. The actual price. Mind you, this product is only found in museums, so you do not find it anywhere. It was preserved especially. So it would be worth five thousand Rands in price and the marketing would be online marketing because it's very convenient and it's fast.

PP: [...]

ZM: This one is special. This one. We are talking about this one. Not the other ones.

PP: I am trying to tell you, buti, [...]

ZM: I think I remember.

LG: OK guys, one last thing, I just want to do a vote on those. So I'm going to ask you all to close your eyes and I want you to have one vote only for which of those presentations, which of those items was the most appealing o you. You can't vote for yourselves! Close your eyes for a moment. And who. I can see some eyes open.

(Laughter)

LG: Who would vote for the ukhamba? Who thinks that's the most interesting? Eyes closed. OK, and then after the ukhamba we had the ingxotha. OK, who was voting for that? And not being able to vote for yourselves. And the next one we had was our grain basket, our harvest basket. And our final item, the waistband. Who's voting for that. OK, lots of people haven't voted. I'm just going to do that again. Quick reminder. Eyes closed. Ukhamba? The arm band, ingxotha? The grain basket, the harvesting basket? And for the waist band. OK, guys, waistband has it as the winners.

(Clapping)

[Prizes distributed]

LG: OK, thank you. I've got lunch, it's served outside. And if we can come back from lunch at half past one. The afternoon session is going to be much shorter and there is going to be afternoon tea with cakes as well. I'm trying to incentivise you to stay. Thank you very much for this morning.

[Lunch]

Session: What's in your Bag?

LG: OK, who would like to start? Anyone? You two ladies? You can sit there and present, that's fine. OK, Dumisile.

DL: You present one item, or the three of them?

LG: Just present the one item.

DL: Cebile said the most important thing she has right now is her money.

LG: Her money?

DL: Yes.

LG: OK. I'll write this down. And why is that?

DL: It's for emergency purposes. Right now, since she has a daughter she left at home. Money will make her life easier because she will just go and catch a taxi and that will be faster than walking to her village. So for emergency purposes and now after this training she will be going to Stanger so she has to have money.

LG: OK, thank you. And Cebile, you have something you can share?

CD: [...]

LG: Guys, can we just give them time to say.

CD: [...] contact numbers.

LG: OK, thank you.

LNy: My name is Lindiwe. [...] he says the most important thing he has now is his ID.

LG: ID. OK.

LNy: He always carries his ID because just in case something happens to him, so it can be easy for him to be identified.

LG: OK.

LNy: Or if he dies.

LG: So more for someone else to identify you. And what is Lindiwe's?

LM: Lindiwe doesn't have a bag right now but she says her hat.

LG: It's a very beautiful hat. Does the hat have a story?

LM: Yes. It is just protecting her hair.

LG: Where did you get the hat? Did you buy it? Did someone give it to you?

LNy: [...]

LG: OK, thank you.

NS: Thully's is umbrella.

LG: Umbrella, OK.

NS: She can use it to protect herself from the sun and in case of rain to protect against the rain.

LG: Thank you.

PP: One is his cell phone.

LG: OK.

PP: He says it's a device he uses to communicate with people and keep his documents.

LG: And his documents, OK. Like ID documents?

PP: Like photos.

LG: Thank you. Thully?

TG: Nkosi's is his keys to open and close his house.

PP: He mentioned that he has his cell phone [...], wallet, some cash [...] business cards, car keys, his keys for the gate at home, door keys. And his single item.

LG: And his wallet is a special wallet that someone bought you as a gift?

PP: [...]

LG: OK, you guys over there.

PP: His is his bag. Inside his bag is laptop, which has [...] very important programmes.

LG: Important programmes, OK.

PP: Cell phone.

LG: Cell phone, OK. Cell phone and laptop and your bag.

PP: And rhymes.

LG: OK, and the other way around.

MZ: I'm going to say he came with a red, small pencil bag. Inside this small pencil bag is small samples of herbs. He's a mobile herbalist.

(Laughter)

LG: OK, a small red pencil bag for the herbalist.

MZ: Small samples in case he needs to help someone.

LG: OK, you guys.

BM: I'm Boyzie Myeni. Bracelet.

LG: Bracelet. Is it the one that you're wearing?

BM: Yes, the bracelet was a gift from a very important woman in her life. And it has a special message. The message is rise young women's club.

LG: What is it? Rise?

BM: Young women's club. And lipstick.

LG: And lipstick, OK. Any particular colour?

BM: Not mentioned.

PP: I just do Boyzie. He has a cell phone [...] with photos, contact details.

LG: Contact details.

XM: My name is Xolani. I present on behalf of my brother Menzi. Menzi is wearing a special belt he bought when on a visit to the UK. And the story about this, he was in the very same store with Barack Obama when he bought that one. The belt is very expensive, more than ten thousand dollars.

(Laughter)

LG: Can we see?

MM: Xolani has a diary. Special diary, yes. His diary have important contacts.

LG: Contacts.

MM: He also use it to write or to remind, to remind himself when he's going to have a meeting with a team of chess. Or when he have to meet with special guests, he writes in his diary to remind himself of the date, time. Yes, that's how he use it.

LG: Thank you. Ngiyabonga.

LN: Laptop.

LG: OK, laptop.

LN: She uses it to do her creative writing. And to prepare for her [...]

LG: Guys, let's just listen up.

LN: She also uses for her music.

BT: He only has in his pockets, because he didn't bring his bag [...] his house keys. He only uses the room outside the house and he's the only one who has access. And then his cell phone, he uses it to download videos and games, music and important documents that he will need for information.

LG: So we've got using cell phones for communication, documents and photos, contacts and download videos and games as well. Thank you. Anyone else who hasn't spoken? Yes.

ZM: I'm going to be speaking about Siyabonga's watch. The watch belonged to his father, which he wore for seventeen years. Although it's broken, it's still a great reminder of him and the man of principle he was.

LG: OK, Siyabonga?

SM: Zandile has got three things. She has got earphones, a ring and zam-buk. It's the earphones that she loves the most. She says music is her life. She listens to

different genres of music, fusion, jazz, maskande, it depends on her mood. But she says music helps her heal, helps her understand things, lifts her spirits.

LG: And you ladies, would you like to share?

LD: I represent Nobuso. [...]

ND: [...] umbrella.

LG: Umbrella, OK. Is there anyone else?

NDi: iJersey.

LG: Jersey, OK.

NDi: Just in case of getting a cold.

NtD: Nothando, [...] purse.

LG: OK, great. Has everyone had a chance to speak? OK, thank you. I'm just going to ask you, to see if it's even possible. The handouts I've given you here, which the museum did for the objects they collected, I'm going to give you these copies. Just in your pairs, to choose one of those items you've presented and to see how you would fill in a card like this for your item if it was going into a museum. Is that OK?

[Breakaway discussions]

LG: OK, how is that? Is it hard?

PP: Yes.

LG: In terms of recording information like this, compared with those presentations you did before, which ways do you think are better for capturing information? Do the cards, are they a good way for presenting that information?

BM: Yes.

LG: OK, you think they are. What do you like about it?

PP: The cards?

LG: Yes.

PP: OK. This card is simple, you can see where you can write. And the topic, what you are talking about.

LG: OK, and in terms of sharing the information with somebody else, so if you think about the presentations you did before when you were talking about, do you think it would be as effective to give that card to someone, or rather do the television advert, the story? Which is more exciting.

PP: It doesn't provide any information, just shows [...] presented by so and so. Doesn't tell whether it's clay pot or [...]

LG: So if, they need more information then. If you were doing this present day and you had the information. This card would work as a format.

PP: It would work but just for the library. But if you want to dip in, find more information, that information, the stuff that we've been [...] because it explains it was clay, how it's made.

LG: The interesting things. Right, thank you. I'm going to collect these in if that's OK. Hopefully there's going to be some tea coming for you. If you want to just take, take a couple of minutes and then I've got some cakes and tea. And when we come back for the last half hour, the exercise we're going to do is think about if you here were setting up a museum for yourselves, for your community to present yourselves to someone else, someone in America perhaps, who doesn't know Groutville, doesn't know where Groutville is, what people do here, what's important to you, what would you put in that exhibition? Everything we've gone through today. So I just want you to think about that while we take a break and then we'll come back and decide.

[Tea Break]

Session: Your Museum

LG: OK, thanks everyone. This is just going to be the last, very quick exercise. So just thinking back over all the material culture items you've seen today, so right back to waistband, ukhamba, your cell phones, your laptops. Is there anything we've gone through that you think additionally be added if you were presenting this group here, your community, your heritage, are there any items that you think are absolutely essential that people should see, that should be included in an exhibition. Yes, which ones.

PP: Isicholo.

LG: Like this?

BT: No, with a c. Instead of t put a c.

LG: Can you tell me why that's important to go up?

BM: [...] it's a hat for our women to wear.

LG: OK, anything else?

NS: [...]

PP: [...]

LG: Can you spell that? Actually, why don't you come write that? Anybody else wants a pen?

[Participants come up to write items on board]

LG: And these items here, are they, do you have, does someone you know have in their homes?

Aud: Yes.

LG: So, if I came here on Monday, I could see them?

BM: Yes, you could do that.

LG: These items here, are they items that. Just five more minutes and then we're done. Are these items that are still used today by people?

Aud: Yes.

LG: OK, so they're still in use. Old but they're still in use.

LNy: One more.

LG: And what about your items that you just presented now? Would you think of putting those in an exhibition as well? So your things like your cell phones, your laptops?

PP: Those are modern things.

LG: I know, but they're still saying something. So would we put these items and then also your items that you had previously as well.

SM: The problem is that unless the item is [...] most of us wouldn't give up the items. A clay pot, even if there's about ten of them at home, still, I won't give up one.

LG: Or perhaps they could just be a photograph of them and that could go in.

SM: Photos are best, I think.

LG: OK, and then, like I said, the modern items, the laptops and cell phones as well, if you were telling a story about your community, you would want to have those modern items in as well?

BT: Yes.

LG: OK, great. That will be our museum then. So those are all things we would need to photograph to put in the exhibition. If I came back Monday, I could maybe come and see some of these.

Aud: Yes.

LG: Thank you. Thanks very much everyone. One last thing, has anyone not had one of those forms I filled out, those consent forms? Thank you OK, Siyabonga has something to say.

SM: Since we have many many languages, I'll say in English so that Laura understands it.

LG: No, don't, it's fine.

SM: Just to say thank you, to thank her for coming, for trying to find out what our culture is all about. We feel our culture is suppressed in a way. Our items are [...] so we take this opportunity to say thank you to her for taking the time to bring the stuff, for her PhD, to worry about our things. We like to see our things go worldwide, to see ukhamba in London [...] to see us in the world stage. So, thank you.

LG: Thank you. Thanks a lot.

END

Appendix 2.2. Eshowe Workshop Transcript
Vukani Museum, Eshowe
3rd February 2017

Facilitator: Laura Kate Gibson (LG)

Participants: Ayanda Ntuli (AN)
Cebisile Mbatha (CM)
Nini Xulu (NX)
Sabelo Nkabinde (SN)
Thandi Nxumalo (TN)
Khosi Shange (KS)
Sizwe Mgwaba (SM)
Zama Mbatha (ZM)

START

Session: Welcome & Information Session

[...]

AN: [Introducing Cebisile Mbatha] She's a very humble person...she's got a very big heart...she's a very good person so, yes.

LG: Siyabonga. I'm glad we have you with us. Thank you. And would you like to introduce Ayanda to the group?

CM: [...] He's not a talkative someone, but he talks (isiZulu)...There's time where he like quietness. He wants to read books. Wherever he goes he may see oh, there's a library and he goes there and finds something to read. And at the moment he has got someone but not yet married.

LG: OK.

AN: Ja.

(Laughter)

LG: Siyabonga. Welcome. Thank you. Good to have you. And who would like to go. Are you ready?

NX: Igama lami nguXulu [...] He said his name is Sabelo. And Sabelo from his father means he was born as an inheritance to the family. So he is a family man and he has become now. And, um, the other thing that I didn't know about him is that his mother was born by Reverend Ndebele. Reverend Ndebele. He is so much into Christianity. And he holds a very good position of educating in the Church.

LG: Wonderful.

NX: That's all.

LG: Thank you. Welcome Sabelo. Good to have you.

- SN: My name is Sabelo [...]
- LG: Welcome Nini. OK, Khosi and Thandi, are you ready?
- TN: This is Thandi Nxumalo. I'm going to tell you a bit about my friend Nkosazana Shange. She was born here in KZN. She went to school at [...] And after completing her Grade 10 she got a post as a privately paid teacher for four years and thereafter she went to work at the hospital as a cleaner. Thereafter she spent time training as a nurse and she also completed her matric. She got married to a Zulu man from KwaZulu by surname.
- KS: Mahlabatini.
- TN: Mahlabatini. She had children with him. Unfortunately he passed away and then she was left with the kids to raise. And thereafter she, she proceeded with her nursing career. She studied at [...] she has just received her diploma as nursing assistant.
- LG: Halalala.
- TN: In KwaHlabisa. She is a very kind person, a very straight person. The problem is, when I became friends with her, I first became friends with the sister, and I've got that problem that if I have a friend in the family, I end up becoming friends with everyone. She is a very good advisor. She is a good advisor. She loves. She reprimands you when you are doing bad things. We are friends. We travel together. We planned some things together. She is such a nice person to be around because I like people who teach me a thing when I meet them. Because I learn a lot from them and then I get to understand other people. Thank you.
- LG: Thank you. Welcome Khosi. Good to have you with us.
- KS: I have to tell you something about my friend Thandi. Some years ago she got married to my neighbour at my home. You know I take her as *magoti*, wendow (?) so *magoti* Thandi is a very kind person, she loves people, she can laugh, she can talk everything, she can give you her heart. So now...we used to travel together, we used to communicate over the phone, we used to tell everyone what with each other, what we want to proceed to because now she's already been pension now, I'm going to pension next year. But we are planning what to do because she's a very [...] somebody [...] my neighbour [...]
- LG: Thank you. Welcome Thandi. I feel, um, very special to be in a group of people so willing to give up their time and happy to talk and thank you very much. I'm going to move on to the next bit of the workshop but before I do I wonder if I can just ask you, all of you have in front of you this information sheet here which just gives you a little bit more about the research and also a consent form to sign. I'll quickly just go through it. If it's not perfect, I apologise, I had a friend help me translate it. If you could just have a look through that. It's mainly to protect you. So if anything we talk about today, if you want it to remain anonymous, if you're not happy to have your name shared, if you don't want to take part any more, then that's fine. Then just mark that on the form. Does everybody have one?

[Chatting about forms and signing forms]

CM: Excuse me. Can I have another chair, I am not comfortable?

LG: Of course, do you want this one?

TN: Is it not the same?

LG: Ah, it's the same.

SN: It's the same.

TN: The trouble with these chairs is they just sag under you and pop away from you when you stand.

CM: It's because of the weight.

(Laughter)

TN: [...]

(Ayanda stacks his chair on top of Cebisile's chair)

CM: Ja.

[Form signing continues]

Session: What's this and what's its story?

LG: Is everyone comfortable enough now? OK. In front of you, you have a pile of postcards. They are for you to keep. So in there, there should be a picture of this one. OK, so this is the one we're going to start with. All of these postcards are photographs I've taken of items that are in the Iziko Museums of Cape Town's collection. So, Iziko now has thirteen museums underneath it. It was made into a big museum out of lots of museums in Cape Town in 2000.

TN: At the Waterfront? Is there one at the Waterfront?

LG: Yes, there is one near the Waterfront. And in the Company Gardens as well as near Parliament. Three, four sites there as well. So these are from the old South African Museum which is up near Parliament. And all of these items were collected in the nineteenth century and twentieth century and they went into that collection being labelled as Zulu. So interesting to see what you think about it because the people who were collecting them were mainly white Europeans who took them in and wrote the records and that's how they're stored now. And supposedly they're Zulu items. We'll see what we think about it. So what I would like you to do, in your two tables, is to just, um, take this item to start with and see between you what you think it is, what you would like to know about the item, how it makes you feel, if you have any impressions about it, if you think it's something nice, something not so nice, if you have any stories or ideas about this one. I'm just going to give you five minutes in your group to do that and then we'll report back. Thank you. And if you want to write anything down, there are some notebooks there. Are the pens all OK now?

TN: Yes [...]

LG: Whatever you like. If you want to note something down then do, if not you can just talk.

[Breakaway group discussions]

LG: Is it something you've seen before? Is it something familiar?

TN: I've seen it somewhere.

NX: I think it's, it's not Zulu.

LG: Ok, that's interesting.

NX: It's not Zulu.

AN: She was just talking and she thinks, you know the Abathwa tribe, ja, she believes that they use it for hunting, probably. Because it has nothing to do with the Zulus. We don't see things like this. So it could be Abathwa.

LG: Abathwa. Er, how am I spelling that?

TN: The San people.

LG: Like this?

TN: T-H.

LG: OK, thank you.

TN: Yes, the San people.

AN: It could be the item that belonged to them.

NX: To do this.

LG: For the hunting? OK.

AN: [...]

NX: [...]

LG: Did anyone else have any other ideas?

TN: Yes, we've got something else. Yes. I think this is used by people who own donkey carts.

LG: Donkey carts? OK.

TN: Yes. For, for beating the donkey. This item makes a lot of noise to scare the donkey to run faster. I also have seen this being used by the Chinese people. This karate thing, something.

LG: Like the martial arts?

TN: Yes, the martial arts. Another idea: used by people when they are throwing stones at a target. Especially for hunting, just like...

AN: [...]

TN: Yes. What is it, what did he use?

AN: Slingshot...These days when you watch the news, the people from (?) they still use the slingshot.

TN: But different materials. But the shape is almost the same.

AN: Yes, the shape is almost the same [...]

TN: And they're throwing to those [...]

LG: But you guys think it's not Zulu. What's your thoughts? It's Zulu, or it's from another group?

TN: Some things are universal.

AN: But this, it can't be Zulu.

TN: But donkey is universal.

LG: Shall I tell you what the museum record says?

TN: Yes.

LG: It's labelled as Zulu. It was collected in the, which year was it collected, collected in the 1870s, and the guy who collected it said that it was used as a puzzle. But remember he may well be wrong.

TN: Yes.

LG: When I did this with the other group, they also said the same: no no no, this isn't Zulu.

NX: The Zulus were not, in the olden days, Zulus were not artistic with leather, except for

TN: Is this made of leather?

KS: Wood.

TN: Yes, wood.

NX: Except wearing it and also using it as mat and things like that. But not as an object like this.

TN: But this looks like wood.

LG: So it's wood but the strings are leather. Thank you. The next one we're going to look at which I think will possibly be more familiar is this one.

TN: Oh, that one, yes.

AN: Clay pot.

LG: Shall I just give you five minutes in your groups to discuss what it is, what you think it's made of, if you have any stories around that, the most important things to know about it to share with other people, do you have any personal stories about it. Do you like it?

TN: OK.

[Breakaway group discussion]

LG: Do you want a couple more minutes? No. You're ready to go on this one. OK, who would like to start?

KS: It's a clay pot.

TN: *Ukhamba. Ukhamba.* Yes. It's used for holding liquids like homebrew. What else. [...] It's fragile, it breaks.

CM: And also for preparing sour milk.

LG: Sour milk. *Amasi.*

All: Yes.

TN: Because of its size, it has mainly been used by the men of the house.

LG: The men of the house. OK, so it's a man's item.

TN: Yes, the men of the house. Because if you have a whole group at your house, as the host, you make use of this, you alone drinks it. And the other people drink from that one. It circulates around. But as the host you drink from that, you alone. To show everyone that you are there, you invite them.

NX: In Zulu it's *umancishana*.

TN: Ja, *umancishana*. U-M-A-N-C-I-S-H-A-N-A.

LG: Another A?

TN: N-A. Ja, also for gifts. When we are exchanging gifts with your in-laws.

LG: Ok so you give

TN: Yes, for the father of your husband. Your father-in-law. It is the rule that the father must have

NX: *Umancishana* is used when, ancestors, ancestral celebrations. So you talk to the ancestors over it and that's why it's not supposed to be given to outsiders. Or even some of the family members.

LG: OK.

TN: The girls from the *Ukhamba* rather be given to [...]

NX: Or stingy. *Umancishana* means stingy.

AN: And you know that we as the Zulu, we don't like stingy people. In our culture, because we are very generous people the Zulu. Just to add that there is a friend of mine who also lives in Pretoria. So he was saying to me when we were together in December...

AN: With the Tswanas in Pretoria, they are not like us, the Zulus. So if the Tswanas, the boys, were together drinking beer of somewhat, if he's hungry he just withdraws privately and he goes and buys something to eat there privately and

he comes back and he continues drinking. It is cultural to us, the Zulus, if I'm hungry Zulu I ask, "guys what we going to eat?" Then I go and buy and we share. That's what you notice about the other tribe. They are, we are totally opposite.

CM: Like the cow. We enjoy with all the community.

TN: In my culture, the Tswanas, when we are killing an ox, yes you do invite everybody, but there is special food for the people of the family. No outsider will be allowed to come and eat that. Yes.

AN: Whereas in our culture, everyone is welcome.

(Laughter)

CM: Nowadays people use *Ukhamba* for decoration.

AN: That's true.

LG: I'm interested in this not giving it to outsiders. So is it, once you've spoken to the ancestors, after that you can't give it?

NX: No, only the man of the house drinks from that.

TN: And it's not only for the Zulu. This is African because as far as Egypt you find them.

CM: But especially the smaller one, *umancishana*. But this size or another bigger one, you can serve people using this one. Not (?). Just *Ukhamba*.

TN: And for the Ndebeles, it is decorated using these colours. (Points to her bag.) Yes, the small one, decorated like this.

LG: So if, um, the little one, if after you've spoken to the ancestors, if it's taken away from the family, does something bad happen, or it's just disrespectful.

TN: There is no chance because it's not stop anywhere. It's in a special place.

LG: It's well looked after.

TN: In a house it is maybe [...] by the father, or the mother of the house. Nobody else.

NX: Where they burn the incense.

TN: Where they burn the incense.

LG: So you gentlemen, you have used the *Ukhamba*?

AN: Yes, it's all in every house. In every home you see that, you see a spear, you see a (kraal?). It's a normal style. So, yes it's a normal style.

LG: And this is an important item. And who makes the *Ukhamba*?

TN: Anyone who can. Anyone who can.

LG: You don't have special training?

KS: But especially women.

TN: Yes, because you learn the culture of making from your own home. If you don't have time to make it, you can go and buy it.

LG: You can buy it.

TN: Yes, but it must be made of clay. Because we have plastic ones today, from China. Yes, Chinese made these plastic ones and they are selling them because they don't break. They're not used for ceremonies like this.

LG: They're just used for decoration?

TN: They're just for drinking. Just for drinking.

LG: And the patterns on them, is the pattern?

TN: It's just round and smooth. Oh, the patterns? Decorate them any way you like.

KS: When it's still wet.

LG: When it's still wet.

TN: We have different ones. You see the one that has got the smaller neck, is for storing milk, for making it sour. So then it's got the hole at the bottom so that the water from the milk, after it has curdled can be released from the rest of the milk so that when you eat the sour milk it is thick and nice.

LG: Yes, nice.

NX: And the cleaning that is used for some special *Ukhamba* is, you make the fire to make it strong, you make the fire

TN: You put in dry grass inside and outside and then you set it alight to make it, to make it.

NX: To make it strong.

TN: Or mealie cobs.

LG: Oh, OK.

NX: Ja.

LG: Have any of you ladies made an *Ukhamba*?

TN: Yes, I have. I have. I used to live with my grandmother in [...]. Have you been to? You must go.

NX: My grandmother used to.

CM: And when it's ready, it makes a certain noise. Yes, a certain noise.

NX: When you buy it, you test it, you do this. (Hitting side of her mug.) There's a certain sound that tells you this is quality.

LG: That this is a good one.

TN: To make it smother there's a pebble that you use to rub up against it. And it will shine forever. You don't need any paint for it.

LG: And how long does it take you to make?

KS: Until it breaks.

TN: No. To make.

KS: Ohhhh.

TN: It depends how fast you are. Even a day. Yes, yes. But for drying it takes a lot longer.

KS: You can make a lot also. You can make maybe five a day.

TN: But the thing, when it drops down. But, but the process starts from when you collect the clay from the river bed. And then removing the stones, and then making it into a smooth putty. Then you start making shapes like spaghetti. Then you make the base, it will depend upon the shape. As you see (pointing to *izinkhamba* on display) they are not the same shape.

LG: So I wonder, this one in the photo, I'll have to get a sound clip to send you to see how it sounds.

NX: With its colour, you can see that it was well burnt.

LG: OK, so it should be

NX: Strong.

TN: The decoration is also done while it is still wet.

LG: The last time I looked at this item was with some very young people. So they had a lot to say but they didn't know this information about the making of it.

TN: OK, OK. Collecting the clay from the riverbanks. Rolling the stones.

KS: And sometimes you grind it.

TN: Sometimes you grind it. There is a grinding stone. Then you grind it.

KS: Until it's fine.

TN: So that's when you are seeing stones that are protruding from.

LG: Are people still making these this way today?

TN: Yes. Yes. It will never end.

KS: Generation to generation.

TN: You don't have to go to school to learn to how to do this. It's from home. There is no formal way like this in a book. You inherit it.

LG: Thank you. Now we'll just do one more before we break for tea. This one here. Oh, I just want to tell you what they said. All they have in the museum records on this, all it says is Zulu pot.

TN: Zulu pot. This one. Because you find it in the Ndebele. You go to the [...], you find it. Clay pot, ja.

LG: Yes, that's something. It's interesting. OK and if we just look at this one here. Does everyone have that? OK, if you just want to have a few minutes on that one, and then we'll take a break after that.

[Breakaway group discussions]

NX: There are two names. That is *iwisa*.

LG: *Iwisa*?

TN: W. Yes, I-S-A.

LG: OK, that's one name. And there's another name as well?

NX: *Isagila*.

TN: I-S-A-G-I-L-A.

NX: Do you know Mr Buthelezi?

LG: Yes, I know Mr Buthelezi. Not personally, but yes.

NX: OK, so he carries that. That's for respectable men.

TN: Prominent, respectable men.

CM: And it's not long.

TN: Short.

NX: Short, it must be short.

LG: A short one, OK.

NX: Yes, a short one.

AN: [...] There's uh so normally there's a [...] King. So King Dingane, one of the Zulu kings, he used to carry that. *Isagila*. Yes when he sit at. Most of his pictures of the Zulu king...you see him sitting down with *iwisa* in his right hand.

LG: OK, in his right hand.

TN: It was made from a very special tree.

AN: Only he as a Zulu king must carry that.

LG: Always in his right hand.

AN: Yes, his right hand. 'Cause all the Zulu kings always has something in his right hand.

TN: Even the Tswanas and the Ndebeles. All the African kings. If you look at King Moshoeshe pictures, he is carrying one. You go to the [...] they carry one, go to the Xhosas, they have one. Yes, yes, that shows that this is the prominent man in the society or in the community. It is not carried by everybody. And it is also made from a special tree. There are special trees.

Aud [...]

LG: What make the?

NX: It's strong.

TN: Ja, it's strong.

LG: What makes the tree special?

TN: It is strong. *Isimbithi*. Very strong. *Isimbithi*.

AN: It doesn't break easily.

TN: It doesn't break easily. It is one of the protected trees.

LG: One of the protected trees. Could I ask you to?

TM: *Umsiwbithi*

LG: And it's protected?

TN: Yes one of the indigenous protected trees.

LG: But now it's just a ceremonial item, you don't use it for something?

TN: No just carry it.

LG: It's just meant to be carried?

NX: But now the artists, especially the female they carry *iwisa* like [...]. And the praise singers, especially the female, but even the males, they [...] one as well.

LG: So that's just?

NX: I don't know whether we should say it but it's contemporary because it wasn't like that before. It's only now that they just carry it as status, something like that.

LG: So still for status. OK. Is there anything that's special about this one, that makes it different?

TN: About this one? Ja. This golden stuff.

LG: So that's not normal?

TN: No, that's not normal.

CM: [...] Polished.

TN: It is polished.

CM: Unlike isagila.

TN: Isagila has got a very long handle. And used by boys like [...] They are hitting birds with the isagilas.

KS: It's not smooth as this.

TN: You can't use this one for hunting.

LG: So this one is very polished?

TN: Cannot be used for hunting purposes.

NX: And every house does have *isagila*. Like when you hear something at night, and then you can, ja, for safety.

KS: Because this is not *isagila*.

TN: No this is not *isagila*. This is not used for fighting. I think we should do away with *isagila* there [pointing at board].

LG: OK. It's *iwisa*. You can tell this from its polished and?

TN: Yes, and the metal. It's made from material that is scarce.

LG: Would you have to get permission from someone to use the tree?

TN: Because the trees are now protected, if they catch you, you'll be in for it.

(CM Coughs)

LG: Would you like some water?

CM: No thank you.

LG: The reason I wanted to share this one with you as well is because according to the records, it comes from Eshowe. It was donated by a lady in the 1940s but her grandfather, what was her grandfather, was a magistrate in Eshowe and, um, and apparently he was presented with this in 1884.

TN: Is it still there?

LG: It's down in the museum, in Cape Town. Yeah. So there's this one and there's one other one as well. And this has this inscription on it. So I also wondered about that. And the inscription on this one says Natal Police. But do you think the inscription would've been made, is it normal or common to inscribe the tops of them?

TN: No. Maybe they gave this thing to that someone because he was very special. Special leader in a way.

LG: Do you want to take a break, get some tea, use the bathroom?

TN: OK.

LG: Five minutes? Thank you. Ja, let's see it's eleven o'clock now, let's say we come back at ten past eleven.

LG: Has everyone had something to eat, something to drink? Feeling refreshed, ready to go? OK. Is there, out of the postcards here, if we just maybe talk about one more or two more items, which one would you like to talk about?

TN: This one.

AN: Yes, this one. *Isikhetho*.

LG: Like this one here? (Points to exhibit.)

AN: Yes, that one.

LG: OK, do you want to talk about it amongst yourselves first, or are you ready to go?

AN: Oh we just.

LG: OK. Fire away. This is the nice thing about a smaller group, you're happy to talk. Normally people are not. And how would

TN: The name first. I-S-A-K-H-E-T-H-O. I'm right.

All: Mmmhmmmm.

TN: Yes! Sotho!

LG: OK, fire away.

TN: Do you want its use or?

LG: Whatever you want to tell me about it.

TN: OK, it's made from special grass. Yes, from special grass.

LG: And what's special about the grass?

TN: About the grass? Made from *ilanga*.

LG: And this is found just in Zululand?

(Short group discussion in isiZulu)

TN: In swampy areas, ja, swampy areas.

AN: (IsiZulu)

TN: The grass...at special times.

LG: At special times?

TN: Special times of the year. Ja. Special times of the year. Not anywhere.

NX: And when you dry it, it mustn't be too dry.

LG: It's a special process. So you can only harvest it at certain times of the year? You pick it at certain times of the year and then dry it.

TN: And make this *isikhetho* too.

LG: OK, what times of the year?

CM: Depends on certain places.

TN: In other places it just grows.

KS: Near water and swamp areas.

CM: [...]

[Breakaway group discussion]

KS: Sometimes they dye. This one is dyed sometimes. Sometimes dyed in certain areas.

CM: Just to decorate.

TN: Dyed. For decoration.

LG: And has it been around for a long time, have people been using it.

TN: Yes, it has been around.

LG: And what is it for?

TN: For straining. Yes, for after, after making beer, or sieving it, there are still some particles floating so before you, you scoop, you make use of this to take the top off.

LG: Skim it.

[Group discussion in isiZulu]

TN: ...from the top of the beer. Should anything fall inside the beer pot, you make use of this. You don't throw beer away!

(Laughter)

NX: Beside the beer you put the one to stir and that one.

TN: The other one is straight. When you serve beer you must have this item [...]

NX: And those.

TN: It is straight, straight for stirring the beer.

NX: *Imbenge*.

TN: It's round, is used for covering the calabash.

CM: It made of

TN: To cover, to cover the calabash. And one is for stirring the beer and the other is for removing the particles that are floating before you drink.

LG: And who would use this? The women?

TN: Yes, women make them. Yes, yes.

NX: But you find there are some men who are also very good. And they are very neat.

TN: The *imbenge* is not straight like to are showing there. (Points to diagram LG has drawn on board.)

LG: OK, this one.

TN: Rather go to the round, the thing that is on top of the calabash. This is your calabash [drawing] and this thing that covers is the *imbenge*.

KS: It is also made out of this material but it's not like a [...]

TN: Yes...calabash.

LG: So that would all come together.

TN: Yes, they are together. The [...] the calabash, the thing that you are stirring [...]

CM: The calabash is made of what?

TN: Of clay.

CM: No, calabash is

[Inaudible group chatter; breakaway conversation in isiZulu]

CM: [...] That's the calabash but this is clay pot. So don't write calabash because it's not calabash.

LG: So this should be *Ukhamba*. And just as you say the small *Ukhamba* can only be used by?

TN: The host.

LG: The host. OK. But anyone can use the *isikhetho*?

KS: Yes, *isikhetho* is for (sweeping gesture with hand to include everyone).

TN: For the moving, for the floating particles.

LG: So that doesn't matter. So if *isikhetho* went outside the house, that would be OK?

TN: Then it doesn't matter.

LG: It doesn't matter. OK.

CM: It's, it's a sieve in other words.

LG: So it's not special in the way the *Ukhamba* is?

TN & CM: No.

LG: Are these still being used?

TN: Pardon?

LG: You're still using these today?

All: Yes, yes.

TN: For home brew. Yes.

LG: So when would you make the home brew, is that quite a special occasion? When you have some people visiting?

TN: Yes, if you have people visiting or if there is a special occasion.

NX: Weddings. Or ceremonies.

CM: [...]

LG: Thank you. I won't go through all of the other ones, unless you want to.

NX: And in thanks giving.

LG: Thanks giving?

NX: Thanks giving.

LG: Is that, like, a set time of year?

NX: Like for instance if he, he is my son and he goes to, to, to work, I must report.

TN: That he is leaving the family and moving far away. Tell the ancestors to look after him wherever he is.

LG: So as a protection.

TN: Yes.

NX: And for luck.

TN: The home brew.

[Group discussion in isiZulu]

TN: And must not be violent.

AN: No we are saying that, I was asking them if you buy a new cow, it comes and joins this new flock, so the owners will take the dung from the kraal and will hit the new cow and hit it with the dung from this one and so they say they are doing it so this one may feel he belongs to the new flock. So that he may not feel like an outsider.

TN: You see when this ox or cow enters the homestead it must smell like the others. If it doesn't smell like the others, they're going to fight it. Yes, just like that. It must smell like them.

AN: Because I was confused [...]

TN: Even if you bring a new chicken, they will start fighting with it. Because they don't know it. But I think that is where segregation comes from.

AN: Yes.

TN: When you come two people of different colour, different culture, they first [leans back in chair] don't know you, they don't want to be part. Like this, also the same with animals. We may try to run away from it because we are human beings but it is natural.

CM: And in the olden days they used to come together and eat.

TN: That is the reason why in African culture, you don't eat this plate here, you eat together in one bowl. That is why there is Ukhamba. I drink from it, I pass it on to her, and so on and so on.

LG: It's a sign of inclusion.

TN: Yes, it makes us to be one.

AN: Yes, uh, I was talking to an Ndebele in my community. Yes I feel sorry if you have all the boys in the home, all the boys, because they would fight each other and so forth. He said no, no, no [...] So I was saying that he, if you were a father, you've got five, three boys, you should be scared as a father because they

might fight each other. Said no, when they are still young, they eat together. So as they grow up, they become men, they [...] each other, they don't fight [...]

TN: Even with the clothes, with the clothes, you make sure that a pair of pants from the other one is given to the younger one and they'll be happy to have it. That makes them feel together, that strengthens their togetherness, of the family.

LG: So all of these items, they're much more than what they just are. More than material things?

TN: Yes, yes. But today because there are diseases, it's not done that much.

LG: It's interesting. I'm thinking all of these things that they have in the museum on that side, that they have them but who has used them, you know, that it has brought these people together.

NX: It's like every preservation of this, it's more valuable that it belonged to my great, great grandma.

TN: That is our society. You find that a grand, grand child is getting married in her great grandmother's wedding garment. Even if some parts have been removed and it has been revamped.

LG: It's still got that.

TN: Ja.

LG: That's something that

TN: That is something common between all the cultures.

LG: Yes, exactly. But when it goes somewhere and you don't have that story any more.

TN: Yes, yes. Some rings are passed on from generation to generation. We always preserved and protected.

NX: And in some homes you find that *Ukhamba* was made in this family by the great great

LG: And then it's even more special?

NX: Mmmm, yes.

TN: And even feel proud.

LG: Yes, of course.

NX: And it brings luck.

Session: Retelling the Stories

LG: It brings luck as well. Thank you. What I was going to ask you to do now was, in terms of keeping and preserving the stories for the next generations and the ones after, was to take in the two groups, to take, um. Or maybe we should have a man in each group. So maybe you two can swap.

AN: OK, we can swap.

LG: Is to take one of the items here in your group and to think about if you were talking to some young Zulu kids who were growing up perhaps in an urban city, maybe Jo'burg, and didn't know so much about it. How would you tell that about these items and stories in such a way that would be interesting? What would you want to tell them about it, would you want to tell them on a television advert, would you show them on a cell phone app, would you want to put the story on the radio? How would you make young people interested in that particular item? Which story would you tell about that? OK, if I give you ten, fifteen minutes. I'll let you choose any item in your group that you would like. I'll give you a big piece of paper and then we'll present to the others.

NX: Just about the items that we have discussed already?

LG: If you wanted to do another item that's not there, you can. But yes if you just choose one item.

AN: OK, just for peace sake, let's make sure we don't do the same thing. We pick this one.

(Laughter as revealed they have all picked same)

TN: But we might have different views.

NX: I knew it.

TN: [...]

NX: OK.

AN: Should we write it down?

NX: OK.

LG: Yes, then you're going to present the item to the other group.

TN: What are these? (Points at stickers.)

LG: Oh these are just if you want to stick anything on here.

NX: We're going to take this one. (Shows LG postcard of *isilulu*.)

[Breakaway Group Discussions]

AN: We are ready.

LG: Are you ready? OK, fantastic. How about the *isilulu* group, do you want a couple more minutes? Are you ready or you want a couple more minutes? You're ready, are you happy to come and present at the front?

AN: Yes, yes, yes. OK, this *isibhamba*, or *ixhama*, OK. So I'm going to do the presentation of *ixhama* based on my team, teammates, it is just our interpretation. So I'm just going to explain a bit of what is *ixhama*, what is *isibhamba*, what it's for, how it's made up so that we can understand. OK first of all what I need to say is *isibhamba* is worn by married women OK. And the main purpose is to ensure that the married woman should not be seen the navel

part OK. So the married woman culturally in Zululand, the people should not see the navel part of the married woman. So *ixhama* is one of the [...] to make sure it's protected, the stomach or the navel part of the married woman. OK, so, quickly I'm just going to explain some of the steps of how it is made, how to produce such a wonderful element of equipment. First of all, it's made of *incema*. So *incema* is a type of grass which is grown here around in Zululand, you've got to cut it. Once you've cut it, you've got to dry it. OK, so let it dry. Then after you dry it, you cut it in half. So you separate it and you put it once again in the water. OK, so once you've put it in the water again, then you weave the ropes. So you separate it so it's different layers. And afterwards you start sewing it. You can put your feet on and just tight like that. So that's what we normally do. And you, what again, you put the decoration with beads [...] And one thing I need to mention is the colours of the beads that are used by the married woman is different from the colours used by unmarried girls like [...] So there are specific colours that you normally use to decorate *isibhamba* for the married woman. When one of the things, once you've done that, to have sewn [...], you put the strings so that you can tighten at the back. These are the strings so you put the strings at the back so that it won't move. So that once it's there, it's tight enough. So that one of the things we've said is that it's decorated so that you can see the beads it's for a married woman. So that one of the things we also need to mention is that is about the colours, we've touched on the colours, and it should be worn after the delivery, ah OK, it should be worn after the delivery of the baby until after the baby is weaned from the mother. OK. So, what we normally do here in Zululand is once the mother has had the baby, then you put *isibhamba*, then you wait until the child is no longer here breastfeeding so that by the time the baby is weaned, now she is free, she can no longer use this *isibhamba*, and it's believed the stomach is returned to its normal size. OK. Because one of the main purpose is to maintain the stomach to its original purpose. OK. 'Cause we've discussed that it, once the mother is pregnant, the appetite, the way of eating, it changes so she might gain a lot of weight and until the delivery, *isibhamba* is used to maintain the body size. So it's mainly used for that. As I've said until after the baby is weaned. It's a very important thing. It lets the air go through to the mother so she doesn't feel like she is squeezed. But then the air can just go in and out. So we just discuss *isibhamba*, it's been used for centuries here in Zululand. So married women just to maintain the body size. It's very respectable equipment, is used by the married women. OK, so that's what we do have.

LG: Thank you.

(Clapping)

AN: Do you have any questions? Because my team and I will really try our best to, any contribution that you want to make [...]

NX: *Isibhamba* [...]

AN: OK, there is another name for it.

CM: But [...] were not decorated mostly. Because it is in, you can't see it like that. It is inside, inside your other clothes.

- TN: [...] But also they have got the same purpose.
- NX: [...] So I think [...] and then [...] is specifically for pregnant women. I mean for women post-delivery. And *isibhamba* is just used as a belt. Yebo. [...] Whereas [...] they don't weave. Yes, they use other material. But it's still there for decorated purposes as a belt.
- AN: *Siyabonga*. Do we have more questions?
- LG: Is this, I feel like we should put your video on to YouTube or something to share with other people.
- AN: No problem.
- LG: Interesting.
- AN: Any questions? Are we all happy? Any contributions from my team that you want to make before I sit down, or a thing you think we should have added that we didn't put here?
- TN: Well she has already added.
- LG: OK. Thank you.
- (Clapping)
- NX: *uqunga*.
- TN: That's the name of the grass.
- NX: That's the name of the grass. And the purpose of *isilulu*, it is used as a storage for all the, all the legumes like beans and [...] I don't know what [...] is in English. *Inhlubu* and the peanuts.
- Aud: [...]
- NX: You don't keep mealies there, there's a specific house for mealies that is up high. It stands on the poles, it's up high there. That's where you keep the mealies. Or, they used to dig underground, that is how they preserved mealies. It had a specific smell, it was called *isancobe*, fermented mealies.
- [Discussion in isiZulu]
- NX: When you make the *isilulu*, you cut that specific grass, *uqunga*, and then you weave it into a rope. And then you sew it into a circle and tapers it towards the brim so that it looks nice. Sometimes you find that it doesn't stand up straight. In a straight circle, it is somehow derailed a little bit.
- LG: Like this one? (Points to basket on display.)
- NX: Like that one. That is like different styles. There is not straight up *isilulu*, it must have that kind of, of, off shape. And then once you've finished, you can decorate your brim in any way that you like. You can make it bigger with another rope to trim it up. Or you can trim it with a thin piece of *ilala*. You just dry it up and then you, you sew it so that it looks nice. How you clean it, we didn't write it here, you don't clean it using water, you just shake, shake, shake the debris out

and then whatever you've kept in for preservation it stays in the kitchen, *exhibeni*, where there is fire now and then and cooking so that it won't be moist. The legumes won't live for a long time in a moist area. So because there's a lot of cooking done here, fire-making, then the legumes will be well preserved. OK, any questions? Anybody with anything to add?

TN: Yes I think the smoke, you see today we have smoked fish and smoked chicken, There is a purpose to the smoke: it preserves the legumes from growing. That is why it is stored in the kitchen. Because from the firewood we have, from the different fumes, that would allow these things to stop growing again.

NX: It works against the moisture.

AN: [...]

NX: [...]

CM: But at first, when you have these beans, you must have already dry, before you store it.

TN: And not on a rainy day.

NX: OK, so that's it for *isilulu*.

LG: Thank you.

(Clapping)

LG: Are these items that anyone who is Zulu would know about, even the younger generations, would they know as much about the items?

TN: They know the fridge.

LG: They know the fridge!

TN: If they want seeds, they go to the nursery. Dried seeds, or shoots, or. They don't know anything, they know fridges.

LG: So I'm thinking in terms, it's interesting that you are talking a lot about how the items are made, to as well have something in the museum, or on the website, like little video clips or something of how things are actually being made in terms of preserving these stories. Sorry, that's my tea. Now that you've given me all of this fantastic information, I just wanted to give you copies of what the old South African Museum, or Iziko, what they have. And I think you might be surprised by how little information there is. So if you have a look at those, is there, um, anything that we've talked about that isn't on the cards, that you think should be there. In terms of, some of them don't even have Zulu names on them, do you think that's something important they should have? There's no record of who the makers are. If this information that's on the cards, if it agrees with what you have to say. If you were writing the records, how would you do it differently?

TN: *Isikhetho*, yes.

LG: So I'm just looking at the one you told me about, the *isikhetho*, that's all that's on there. I suppose at least they have the Zulu name. But there's nothing about

the maker. What information would you want to know if you were looking at this that's not on the card there? If you were showing it to a young person.

TN: The thing is, I don't understand your question.

AN: This thing you are asking, we have already covered.

LG: Yup, so I'm just asking, so in terms of looking at this we would want to know who made it.

AN: Yes.

LG: How it's made. These are the important things.

AN: Yes.

LG: So who made it, how it's made, um, the area that it came from as well.

AN: Yes.

LG: OK, anything else that you think is very important?

NX: Maybe about the sizes. *Isikhetho*.

LG: OK, size of the items?

NX: Because with *Ukhamba*, you can't use a very, very small one.

LG: Sizes. Because if you had the size of the *Ukhamba*, you'd be able to know if it was for the host?

NX: Yes. Like that one it would be too big for *umancishana*. It's a small *Ukhamba*.

LG: So sizes can tell you?

SM: Material. The materials.

LG: Materials. Ja.

TN: The purpose.

LG: The purpose, OK. Anything else that we've discussed? The name in isiZulu as well, at the moment I think most of them are just in English.

AN: Yes, yes. Zulu.

TN: The question who made it. To me it seems to be about one person. If you say who makes it.

LG: Who makes. OK.

TN: Usually by women.

LG: I suppose, would you want to know also who used it, as well as who made it, if we're talking about, say, this item.

TN: Mmmm.

LG: OK, in terms of the who makes it, does it make a difference for some of these items, the artist. Something special if a particular person made it? If it was a

more famous artist, or if it was your mother, does that have any impact on the object?

TN: I think it's something that for instance with the *isikhetho*, it's something that's made by women in general, not by specific people.

LG: So whether it's the female or the male making it.

NX: Some men are also.

TN: Some men. It's made by women usually because it's women who make beer for the men.

LG: I'm just thinking if you saw this and you knew nothing about it, what would be the important things to tell.

TN: OK.

NX: Like commercially, the people that are selling *isikhetho*, are men.

AN: Oh yes yes yes.

LG: OK and they make it and sell it?

NX: Mmmm.

LG: Is that the normal way that it would be? If you make it, you also sell it? Or does it happen that you make it and somebody else sells it on your behalf?

NX: They make it.

AN: In our shop here, I've seen some original, who sell it to the owner of the shop who sell it to the tourist.

LG: OK. So you go through this process.

AN: The middleman.

LG: And then it's hard to keep track. As we said, the where and in terms of trying to communicate this information to wider audiences than right in front of you. We were talking about Facebook earlier as a way of sharing things, are there other ways, other platforms, for sharing this.

TN: Brochures.

LG: Sorry?

TN: Brochures.

LG: Brochures. Printed brochures?

TN: Yes, printed brochures.

LG: OK, anything else? Would Facebook be a good way to share that information?

AN: Yes. I want to make sure, is the same thing issuing pamphlets, brochures?

TN: Yes it is.

LG: So Facebook, how would you do it on that? Video or?

AN: Post it. Pictures.

LG: You'd post a picture. OK. So that would be for the younger people?

TN: If you are attending a ceremony somewhere, and you come to see this thing and you ask about it, and they tell you.

LG: So also just the oral telling as well?

TN: Yes, yes.

LG: OK. And if we're saying that Facebook would be a good way to share information with younger people, but for older generations, telling the stories and printed brochures would be a better way of doing it. OK. What about websites, like museum websites?

TN: Yes that would appeal to the younger generation. But the older generation, those born before technology, I don't worry myself about these things.

LG: OK, so.

TN: If you want to see something, like this. (Holds up postcard.)

NX: Some young people would like to venture for commercial reasons, they would like to venture into these items.

TN: But the older generation, it's either I know it or I see it in [...]

NX: Like we had a young man at Melmoth, she was, he was buying the head dress from near there. And he was like mentoring them and telling them to make the same pattern so that if I see, *isicholo*, I like it from her, I want something like that, exactly like that, so she was, he was teaching them to make exactly, if he says hundred, the hundred must be of the same pattern. Even if it's different sizes, same pattern because that is what lacks with people who makes these things. You see something like that and then when you make an order, a big order, it comes in different makes you see.

LG: So for commercial purposes? I see.

NX: So they want to go into business selling traditional things overseas, for instance, so websites would be a good media.

LG: OK so we're thinking there that the technology thing is more for the younger people to get their work out.

TN: They're also involving themselves in such things. That were done by women previously. Because of joblessness.

LG: Ah, OK.

TN: Creating job opportunities.

LG: OK, for the men as well?

NX: Because some of them they go overseas to study and then they see opportunities in all of selling South African art and then they get into that.

- LG: Like you were saying, people go to London. I suppose if you can't come back, where do you?
- NX: Because those hat makers were making lots and lots of money because in France, their fashion and things, they wear those things.
- TN: Also in China. They use different materials, but they use the shape. Of the headgear of the Zulu women.
- LG: How do you feel about that?
- TN: No, I feel, I feel sad about it. Because I don't really like it. Because they are robbing us of our own creativity.
- NX: Maybe it's a wake up call!
- TN: Pardon? I don't like it, I don't like it. For instance with this Xhosa skirt, some people are making a living out of making these skirts. And the Chinese made them in bulk, give them to the shops and they sell them cheap, cheap. The person who started making this becomes demotivated.
- KS: [...]
- TN: Yes they go to the Chinese shop. You see the calabashes. People made a living out of this *Ukhambas*. But the Chinese are making the plastic ones. And the disadvantage is it makes the beer to become sour faster than it should. So.
- NX: They are taking advantage of the [...] market.
- AN: Do you know what these ladies are saying is true. Because I still remember in 2010 during the World Cup, there was this issue of vuvuzela for celebrating for soccer fans. So the Shembe faith group, for many years they've been using in worship services, for dancing and so on. So they claimed ownership of the instrument. So it was very popular in 2010, there was a market for them. So the Chinese they manufactured millions of them. They wanted the ownership right. Yes you are making but we are the owners. And I think they made a settlement to pay the rights of ownership to the Shembe faith. Because it was used for many years in their Church so now they saw there's a market for it in 2010, they made it.
- TN: The Chinese people, they look at your creativity, they steal it. And they make money out of it.
- NX: Entrepreneurship is not our thing. Is not our thing.
- AN: We Blacks, or Zulus?
- NX: Yes, yes, yes. More especially the people who are making these things. They are used to small scale. For instance, let's say I am a mother and making these things. I won't teach my daughter or my son to make these things so that they can sell in bulk. We don't do that. So they are, the other people are taking advantage of that. We need to influence and encourage to be entrepreneurs in whatever they are skilled to do. That is where we should start involving.
- TN: It's not, it's not easy.

- NX: It's not easy. Then because there's a demand you can't meet, Chinese are going to come.
- TN: They are always there. You see they are walking around in shops taking pictures of some items and they sell the pictures to China and the things are coming back at a cheaper price, made of cheap materials.
- LG: But then it's like you are saying, the making of *Ukhamba* is a process: you go to the river, you collect the clay.
- TN: Yes, yes. You go to the river to collect the clay. They make plastic. Plastic does not break. You go to the plastic. And what about you with the clay.
- NX: This man outside is making *isikhetho*. And then comes the tourist here. And they see *isikhetho* and they want it. And they say, Nxumalo, I want a thousand. And Nxumalo say, Oooooo. You know.
- TN: And also the availability of the material to make the *isikhetho*. It's at a certain time of the year. And some areas are protected, you are not allowed to go and cut grass there.
- NX: But we need to advocate for government involvement in entrepreneurship in the rural areas.
- LG: But I think that's it, if people realised how special it is, how long it took, how valuable it is.
- AN: What she said is true in terms of
- NX: Also, you've got to reenergise the young people. Because some of them, they look down.
- TN: Yes, they look down on these things.
- AN: Excuse me. What she said, the same thing. In 2011, normally in May here we have Museum Day, Zama and everyone organise and people come and there is a market. Another day a woman from Mpofu, one of the villages around, she had her clay pot, small clay pots here. I still remember that day. Probably May 2011. A certain tourist came from Belgium, or I don't know, whatever, and she had a camera on and she said, I was just there as a translator, and the tourist said, she normally sell them and you buy one, and the tourist said, "I want from here to there. How much?" (Holding hands to head.) She was shocked that she wanted all the pots. And now we are calculating how much should be paid. And she made a lot in one day. And we were all shocked because normally when they come, they buy one. This tourist just stood and said from here to there. Just like that! I want all these. And this woman was so shocked, she had to pack her things and go home. She had nothing to sell.
- LG: So then the museum, as well as preserving the things, it's providing commercial opportunities? Thank you. I'll just check what the time is, if it's lunchtime. OK, yes, shall we take a lunch break? I think everyone is hungry. There's a table that's set for us in the restaurant where we can have a hot meal and regain some energy for this afternoon which will be a slightly shorter session. Thank you so much for all of your contributions this morning. Yes, let's take an hour, relax.

AN: It's half twelve now.

LG: OK, come back at half past one. Lunch will be ready in about ten minutes or so.

AN: OK.

[Lunch]

Session: What's In Your Bag?

LG: Have you been converted? Are you going to die for South Africa?

AN: Why not! Yes, I will.

(Laughter)

AN: Yes, I will die for the gold of this country, the trees, the people.

NX: [...] i-clay, amaclay, to make the clay pots. (IsiZulu) I am telling him, next to his place where he can get the clay that he can die for.

(Laughter)

ZM: ...to make clay things. Said OK, I've got clay, so, you're providing jobs for them. Not men only. Not women only. But men and women. Same. Because actually it's now art.

NX: So that you gave them something to die for.

(Laughter)

ZM: Die for your land, that bit of land.

AN: [...]

NX: [...] You can't go and claim something from someone else.

AN: [...] identify with that person like a [...] OK, I think we are ready.

LG: OK, then the next exercise while everyone is feeling a little heavy from the food, is to ask you to break away into twos again. So maybe I can go with you. So what I'm going to ask you to do with your partner is to think about something you're wearing today, or normally carry around with you, that means something to you. So for me, for example, I'll often wear this ring that a friend gave to me and I'll often wear when I do workshops or something because I feel like it's lucky, something lucky.

TN: A lucky ornament.

LG: Yup. So just to share with your partner three, three items that you have that are something. It might just be something that you carry around with you that you don't think about too much, or you just throw in your handbag when you leave the house, put it on. Any three items and then we'll share them. And depending on how much time we have, we'll present back to the group one thing of your partner's that's special to them. Is that OK? Does that make sense?

TN: Yes.

LG: OK, let's take ten minutes. Sizwe, would you go with Nini?

[Breakaway Group Discussions]

LG: Do you want another five minutes?

NX: When you say your pen, do you mean pen? (Laughing) The special pen, where is it?

SM: In my office.

NX: Ah *wena*, you're not carrying it. Who gave it to you?

SM: A student I was teaching.

LG: Are you ready?

AN: Yes.

LG: OK. Who would like to start?

AN: Nini.

LG: OK. So these are the three items of Sizwe. OK.

NX: It's a cell phone. A pen. And a diary.

LG: And a diary. OK. And what are the reasons?

NX: The cell phone is to connect with people, to make calls, to receive calls. And to track time.

LG: So sort of like a watch. Yup.

NX: There's something that he didn't tell me about the phone. (Mimics texting.)

LG: The texting.

(Laughter)

KS: Playing games.

LG: Sizwe, what would you say you use your phone most for?

SM: WhatsApp.

LG: WhatsApp. Yup.

NX: But not when he's at work.

LG: Not when he's at work.

(Laughter)

LG: We should have Zama here so your colleagues can hear.

NX: And the pen, the pen is for writing and also recording whatever is.

LG: A special kind of pen?

NX: And also it's a special pen.

LG: A special pen. OK. What makes it special?

SM: I was given it by a student as a gift.

(Nkabinde enters and Mgwaba stands up to give him back his chair.)

NX: OK and the diary. The diary is to write important information and whatever needs to be recorded. And for reference.

LG: Is it like a work diary? To make your appointments.

SM: Yes.

NX: Ok.

LG: Thank you.

NX: That's it.

LG: Thank you very much. OK, I'll grab a different colour. OK, Sizwe, Nini's.

SM: She likes her bag. Bag. A bag.

LG: Bag. OK.

SM: Glasses. And rosary. Roman Catholic rosary.

LG: OK.

SM: The bag she has been carrying since for seventeen years old.

LG: Seventeen years. Since seventeen years old. Wow.

NX: No. The bag is seventeen years old.

LG: Oh, the bag is seventeen years old. Wow.

SM: She also says it's pure leather. She takes her bag when she goes to church, goes shopping.

LG: Everywhere. OK. So this bag would have many stories if it could talk.

AN: Oh yes.

SM: Glasses, she use glasses because she has poor eyesight, and diabetic.

LG: OK.

SM: So make it easier for her to read.

LG: So something quite practical and a sentimental.

SM: And rosary to remind her, because of God, because she is a Christian [...] It offers her some sort of protection, psychologically.

LG: Thank you very much. Those are very interesting items.

AN: It's our turn.

LG: Yes.

AN: So my concern is that some of the items are similar.

LG: That's alright. It doesn't matter.

AN: First of all is the bag.

LG: OK.

AN: She says the bag has all the items she needs whenever she goes to town, all the things she needs are inside the bag. So if she, maybe she can make a mistake and take the wrong bag, she will have a headache.

LG: OK.

AN: So she doesn't separate with that bag, it's very special. And number two, a cell phone.

LG: Cell phone?

AN: Cell phone is very important. The family and friends, if they want to speak to her, they phone her, they ask things about family issues, so the cell phone is very, very important.

LG: OK.

AN: Yep. And she also mentioned that she, um, especially, African attire so to say. That the skirt she bought herself but the top she receive as a gift from her sister. She says when she wears this African attire, she feels on top of the world.

LG: OK, lovely.

AN: It's a very wonderful thing. It's one of the special clothes.

LG: So the top from her sister?

AN: Yes, from her sister. So it was a gift. And we have discussed that you can have, uh, for example a watch that you have bought for yourself, but then you can have another watch that you were given as a gift. The one that you got as a gift is more special than the one that you got for yourself. So the reason that it's special is that it was a gift.

LG: Like your pen Sizwe?

AN: Oh yes. OK, that's all.

LG: Thank you very much. Nini, did you buy your bag yourself?

NX: Yes.

CM: Now, Ayanda. Ayanda also includes a cell phone. And he also has a special shirt.

LG: A special shirt?

CM: A special shirt. Whenever he wears it, he feels great. Because he was given it by a certain friend.

LG: Can you describe the shirt?

CM: And a wallet.

AN: The shirt is just a short-sleeved with, er, crosses. It was a gift from one of my closest friends.

LG: And the wallet?

CM: And the licence and the ID are kept there in the wallet.

LG: So for practical carrying around. So the particular kind of wallet is not so important as having something to store them in. OK, thank you very much.

TN: Khosi, she is wearing a Zulu traditional attire.

LG: Zulu attire. So the skirt

TN: The skirt, the top and the headscarf. Mmmhmmm. The skirt is very special. It substitutes the leather cow skirt, skirt made of cow which is much heavier than this one. It is beautifully decorated. Bright colours. OK, another one is the cell phone.

LG: The cell phone, yup.

TN: The cell phone will also inform her if someone is stealing money because it is connected to the bank.

LG: Yes.

TN: Uses it for googling.

LG: Uses it for what?

TN: For googling information. And [...]. The third one is the small bag. Special and unusual. Inside are personal, personal things inside. Like the ID, bank cards, and some cosmetics.

LG: And Khosi did you buy the bag yourself?

KS: Yes.

LG: That's interesting about the banking, all your banking is done on the cell phone.

TN: [...]

LG: Sabelo would you share with us? We were just talking about three items that we carry around with us every day and why they are special to us and why they are carried around. I know you are a bit on the spot but do you have three items that you would share with us?

KS: Thandi. Thandi's first.

LG: Sorry, sorry. Yes, sorry.

KS: Thandi is wearing Ndebele attire. It is very special to her because it was bought by her sister during the time when her daughter was getting married, er, wanted to remind her of traditional.

LG: The daughter is Norway?

TN: Yes, the daughter who lives in Norway.

KS: The blanket that she is using also matches the skirt. It's bright colours, made them to see them.

TN: To stand out in a crowd.

KS: Yes, to stand out in a crowd.

TN: To show that she comes from a different culture.

KS: ...the decoration of the skirt. It can show you how many kids does he have.

LG: So does this mean you have five children.

TN: Four. I have four.

LG: Four?

TN: Yes, yes, four.

AN: It's beautiful.

LG: Yes, very beautiful.

AN: I'm sure you wear it on special occasions.

TN: Yes.

KS: She is also carrying her cell phone.

LG: Cell phone. Yup.

AN: Even the bag.

KS: A special bag. That shows she is Ndebele. She is related to the Ndebele.

TN: OK. Cell phone.

KS: The communication with her family.

TN: [...] overseas.

KS: To skype to her daughter overseas. Personal details.

TN: It also has something for showing directions. When you're driving, it tells you, you are on the correct route, turn left. Navigation. Yes, navigation.

LG: Thank you very much. And Sabelo, what are yours.

SN: Well I, I only have two cell phones.

LG: Two cell phones, OK.

SN: One for receiving information because if I, because if I keep both of them for the same information, I have a problem with the MTN. They keep on taking my money.

(Laughter)

SN: Therefore I only receive. Other one is for phoning people.

LG: OK.

SN: Receiving information from my children, my grandchildren.

LG: OK.

SN: I enjoy traditional wear like *ibeshu*. I have *ibeshu*. I have *Umkhonto* at home. So if somebody comes home and tries to make trouble, I just look at my

TN: Spear.

SN: Spear. I just look at my spear so that he stops talking to me. Because he knows that I can do that immediately. (Mimics grabbing spear.) But I never have. I just look at it.

(Laughter)

SN: I also keep cattle. I have been feeding my calf at home.

LG: OK.

SN: I enjoy keeping cattle. [...] Friends and relatives.

LG: Thank you. So the MTN phone is just for receiving and then the other one is for calling people. Can I ask you which the other one is?

SN: Oh, it's Vodacom. Yes.

LG: Thank you very much. So this is interesting. It's a mix of very new items. Did you forget something?

TN: Yes, a product that I'm selling. It is in the car. I keep it always wherever I go.

LG: What is it?

TN: The name of the product is *xangoe*. It's X-A-N-G-O-E. It's made from mango fruit.

LG: X. Like this.

TN: Yes. With E at the end.

LG: E.

TN: Yes.

LG: OK. And it's made from mangoes?

TN: Yes, it's made from mangoes. It assists people who have hypertension, diabetic, cancer, and other skin conditions and also sinusitis.

LG: It sounds like a miracle product.

TN: Yes it is a miracle product. Yes it is.

LG: And you're selling that?

TN: Yes, I am selling it. Selling it. I have it in the boot of my car. It's in there.

LG: Thank you. So we have all sorts of things. Commercial things, sentimental things, practical things as well. I'm just going to ask you to do one little exercise. On here, these blank cards, these are blank versions of the original

museum cards. If you could put the sort of information you would want to know, where's it from, what what what. If you just imagine that you were the museum receiving one of these items, just choose one of your ones.

TN: Any one will do?

LG: Anything you've just spoken about. What would be the information you would quickly record.

AN: Can you just explain it again?

LG: So just on this blank piece of paper, one of the items that you've just shared with us up there, if that item was going into a museum, it could be your cell phone, anything, what information would you want to be recorded about that item?

AN: Oh, OK.

LG: Really quickly. Say you've got all these things going on and you've got just a couple of minutes to write it down. You can just use one half. Wherever you want the information to go on there. Do you need another?

NX: Anyhow?

LG: Yes, anyhow you like. Is it easy to capture the information that way?

AN: In what way?

LG: The form. Is it a nice way to capture the information?

AN: Yes, uh, I think it's sorted.

TN: Just one item.

LG: Yes, one item. Otherwise it's too much work. And when you're done with it, would it be OK if I took a photo of you with your items?

AN: Laura, you don't even have to ask.

LG: Well, it's quite a private thing to take photos. OK, which item shall I take a photo of you with?

AN: Cell phone.

LG: Cell phone, OK.

AN: Do I have to take my cell phone out?

LG: Uh huh.

AN: Hello. I am in a workshop.

(Laughter)

AN: And Nini she is here. And Thandi. Yes, yes. But we finish right now.

LG: Thandi, can I take a whole picture of you with your?

TN: Shall I stand up? OK.

[TN stands up; LG takes photograph.]

LG: Thank you.

[KS stands up; LG takes photo]

KS: Ngiyabonga.

LG: I'll make sure you get copies of these. Sabelo, can I take of you? With your two cell phones.

SN: Oh yes.

(Laughter)

LG: And then you have to tell us which is the receiving and which is the.

SN: OK. This one.

LG: And the other one.

(Laughter)

LG: Perfect. Thank you.

LG: Very nice. Beautiful. Thank you. And then Nini, can I take a whole?

LG: Do you want to break for five minutes for tea? I'm just going to take a few more minutes of your time afterwards. Do you want to carry on or would you like to stop for tea? OK, so we just take five, ten minutes to rest or take some tea.

Session: Your Museum

NX: Anything?

TN: Any type of tangible things?

LG: It doesn't have to be tangible actually. It could be intangible as well, if you think there's something intangible that should go in.

NX: *Igubu*.

TN: Drums.

NX: African drums.

LG: Sizwe, could I ask you to be the scribe in isiZulu.

SM: African drums.

LG: I think I should write it in Zulu as well.

SM: I-S-G-U-B-U

TN: H-U. Yes.

LG: African drums. OK. So that one should be in.

NX: You know some of the drums are for the real deal, to play music. But some of the drums are for decoration. The mini ones, you know. They are for decoration.

TN: Some are for traditional ceremony.

NX: Yes.

LG: So the ones are for traditional ceremonies.

NX: So there are different types of, of.

LG: OK.

TN: For traditional ceremonies they make use of wet skin. Wet skin. They don't wait for it to dry up. And they call it, what do they call it.

LG: Wet skin.

TN: Wet skin.

NX: *Ingu*.

NX: You know when they play like this and do the (makes whooo, whooo sound and mimics pulling threads). They make a hole and put this wet skin and they do this and they make a nice, different sound.

TN: [...] dry skin.

NX: Yes.

TN: It is for traditional ceremonies, particularly when a girl comes to an age.

LG: So that is definitely something you would want to have.

TN: Yes. Another one is [...]

NX: For sangomas.

TN: Sangomas. Traditional healers.

NX: Sangomas. Traditional healers, inyanga.

TN: Sangoma, it's like a psychic.

NX: Ja.

LG: So what, you would want to put the sangoma in the exhibition?

TN: Yes.

LG: So this would be a living exhibition.

TN: OK, there's going to be a sangoma there.

KS: [...]

TN: Not fortune only. No.

LG: So someone who is predicting?

TN: Prediction, yes.

LG: And with the drums, if it was in your exhibition, would you have someone playing them? You would want to have them playing the music.

TN: Yes. Someone playing, and the sangoma telling.

NX: And the Shembe people plays these very nicely.

TN: Shembe, yes. Some churches. African churches. Even when I was in Mozambique they are making use of these drums.

LG: Anything else that you would want to put in? To show the community, the culture.

NX: [...] Traditional dance from schools.

LG: Traditional dancing, OK. Is there a Zulu name for the traditional dance?

TN: Yes. I-N-D-L-A-M-U. M-U.

LG: M-U. *Indlamu*.

TN: Yes, *indlamu*. There is another type of dance. S-H-I-Y-A-M-A-M-E-N-E. N-I.

LG: M-I.

TN: It's another type of dance.

NX: The E must be I. The last E must be I and then the M-I is not there.

LG: OK.

[Group discussion in isiZulu]

NX: *Ingoma*.

[Group discussion in isiZulu]

NX: We are saying there's a, each family has their own very special ancestral song.

LG: OK.

NX: So I don't think we can exhibit that because it's not something to exhibit.

LG: OK. Is it something private?

NX: It's a serious thing.

LG: Is it something you should keep in the family?

NX: Yes, yes.

LG: So if you were doing this just for your family, you might have your ancestral song.

NX: Yes, mmmhmmm.

AN: [...]

NX: It's a story, once upon a time.

AN: It's a true story.

NX: And then came a, a tiger. A Tiger. Came the tiger. And was just about grabbing it. And then a certain woman came and sang that ancestral song, and then the tiger, the tiger went away. Saved by the song.

ZM: Another ancestral thing actually being talked about.

AN: But it was a story being told.

LG: But now it's, as things do.

AN: Yes.

TN: In my clan there is a [...] I don't know what they call it in Zulu or in English. If you eat it and you belong to my surname, you become blind forever.

LG: A bread?

TN: Blind, forever. No, not a bread, a bird. In other words, in our, in my clan you're supposed to eat certain birds, but not this one.

AN: [...]

TN: And for the father to prove this child belongs to him, he had to put the child inside the kraal and then allow the gate to open. And the child became scared. If the child comes out through the gate, the child belongs to that family. This one is not a story, I know it. But if the child went out through the holes of the kraal, that child does not belong. They put the child inside, boy child especially. But if the child escapes. He was five years old. If he escapes through the gate, then he belongs to that family. But if he doesn't, then the mother knows which way.

AN: [...]

TN: Yes, there's a herd of cattle. And the others have to cut their faces.

AN: [...] I will translate it for you. So there's a custom where you cut your face. So my sister, who happened to be my neighbour, had a son. Three year old toddler. So he would do funny things, for example when he would play with other kids, he would leave and go outside and come back in and release himself inside the home. And would take the knife and cut the thing without [...]. And then what they did, they took her to the family, they did some rituals for the child and he came back normal and is passing with distinction, good grades at school. So I think they had to cut his face.

LG: And so all of this Knowledge, how, is it still being carried on?

TN: Yes.

LG: It is passed on?

TN: Yes, it is passed on.

NX: It's not documented.

LG: How would you feel about it being documented? Or is it not for everybody to know?

NX: I think we need to instil the culture of documentation. Because, um, that's how we lose this indigenous knowledge.

LG: But as you say, it's quite private? The ancestral songs.

TN: Even within the families, not everyone. There should be a specific person in the family.

AN: Because for example, even to be appointed as a chief, I didn't know this, our Zulu kings, to be a king, the king of Ntulis, the king of Mkhizes, so after the king you go to a school, and because there are certain rituals that the king does to you as the next chief of the nation, of that tribe, then after a certain day the king will come and present to your tribe and say, this is your king, this is your chief. And you report to the Zulu king. But then I was told that after a certain day when you are a chief, you've been appointed, all amadoda from different tribes, from Mkhize, from Buthelezi, Phumas, all the tribes, they will go with you in a game reserve. So if you kill, like, a tiger, or a leopard, now you are firm as a chief. So you are not just a chief [...] I didn't know there are rules. Rituals. So you are not just being placed there as a chief. You have to go through the process.

ZM: They will want the skin, the skin of the animal.

AN: That you've killed.

TN: And you are not voted in.

AN: No, I second you.

(Laughter)

LG: Well thank you very much. Thank you for giving me your time and for being such great participants. I have learnt a lot from you and I have a lot to take back. Thank you.

TN: Thank you very much for coming.

LG: Thank you for having me. Thanks Zama and Sizwe.

NX: And this bag must be full of that thing.

(Laughter)

AN: You are so nice.

LG: Oh, can I just take your email and your cell phones so I can send you the photos?

TN: We don't have one photo as a group.

LG: Oh no, we must take a photo.

AN: Oh yes, yes, yes.

END

Appendix 2.3. Dundee Workshop Transcript

Talana Museum, Dundee

30th March 2017

Facilitator: Laura Kate Gibson (LG)

Participants: Gustav Röhrs (GR)
Rosalind Selepe (RS)
Sphamandla Luvuno (SL)
Mpilo Dlamini (MD)
Absai Mhlongo (AM)
Mxolisi Mdluli (MM)
Siyathokoza Africa (SA)
Wilfred Mchunu (WM)
Bornwell Masuku (BM)
Norman Leveridg (NL)
Louis Eksteen (LE)
Siyabonga S Moloi (SSM)
Thokozile S Mbele (TM)
Slindi Ndlovu (SN)

Group response (Aud)

Unidentified participant (PP)

START:

Session: Welcome & Information Session

LG: Sanibonani

All: Yebo

GR: What's the second Zulu word you can say?

(Laughter)

LG: *Ngiyamazama*. Thank you all very much for coming and giving up your time. I know everyone's time is very precious. I am running a series of workshops and this is the third one I'm doing. The first was in Groutville at the Luthuli Museum with the community around there. And I also ran one earlier this year at the Vukani Museum in Eshowe with the community members around there. And the reason I'm doing these is as part of my PhD research which is through a university in London, England, which is where I'm originally from. I'm looking at the collections in museums and the way information came to be gathered and how a lot of the information is actually quite inaccurate, for many reasons, partly to do with how the items were collected, who provided the information. I'm very interested in, at the moment, in a collection of items in the old South African Museum of Cape Town that has been classified as the Zulu collection. The items were collected in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century and the information...is very sparse and what's interesting is it's very rare that the information is actually provided by people who made the items or who are from the areas where they were taken from. So I'm trying to look at those discrepancies and what people would want to know about those items now and

where there are differences and where there should be more information...So today I want to go through a series of activities to ask you to, to invite you to try and think differently about some of these things and see how they would be relevant today. I just want to start with signing the consent forms and information forms in front of you. And if you have any questions about these today you must just go ahead and ask me. And if you don't want to be recorded or quoted, that's fine [...] I've got some [...] this is just [...]

Are you all working in museums?

Is anybody not working in a museum?

(3 hands raised)

I just wanted to use this first part, partly to go through and sign the consent forms that you've got in front of you and just to go through some house rules which are quite basic and straightforward.

(Reading out rules from screen)

What I would like to ask you to do is just get to know the person next to you a little better. To find out their name, to find out something they like, and something that not everybody knows about them. So if I was introducing myself, I would tell you my name is Laura, something I really like is dark chocolate and something not everybody knows is that I lived in China for a year. So if you can just take a few moments and speak to the person next to you and then we'll go around and introduce your partner to the rest of the group.

(Laughter)

[Breakaway group discussions]

LG: Ok, do we have any volunteers to start?

RS: This is Sphamandla Luvuno. He likes movies, especially drama ones. And he's not afraid of death.

SL: Ok, this is Rosalind Selepe. She likes food. But she [...]

(Laughter)

LG: Thank you very much.

MD: I am going to introduce Sandra Williams. She loves sweet stuff. And something you don't know about her is she's an outgoing person.

SW: This is Mpilo Dlamini [...] She likes to be with her friends and something you don't know is she is very talkative.

(Laughter)

LG: It seems you did know she is very talkative.

AM: Sanibonani. This young lady [Hlobisile Ntshangase] works at the information centre in Vryheid. She actually...she said that people don't know that she's a

very clever young woman. And that she is wise. She is good hearted. And, ja, that is all.

LG: Thank you.

HN: This is [Absai Mhlongo]. He loves hip-hop.

AM: Not hip-hop.

(Laughter)

AM: Pop music.

MM: [...]

HM: He is always...listening to pop. Not hip-hop.

(Laughter)

MM: Greetings. I'm going to introduce Mr Gustav Röhrs. [...] He is secretary of [...] And then something that you don't know about him, he is retired lawyer [...]

GR: Thank you. This is Mxolisi Mdluli. I think he said he was born in Swaziland and he became a Zulu. He was born in Swaziland then he grew up in Vryheid and now I think he's a proper Zulu. He works at the New Republic Tourism and Museum in Vryheid. He says that the thing he likes is to make a difference so that's an important thing. He likes reading and, er, I think we see each other quite often, so that's Mxolisi Mdluli.

LG: Thank you.

SA: I'm going to introduce Wilfred Mchunu from Vryheid. He likes meeting new people, adventure, travel and reading. What people don't know about him is he loves his family and his children.

(Laughter)

WM: Thank you. Thank you. Siya [...] she is one of our great [...] she is coming from ?Hoek. She is the one who works here at Talana Museum as one of the secretariats...Whenever we go to the shops I know what she likes: chocolate (claps). Travelling. And she is a social media fundi. She is the one who is running Facebook page for...as well as for the Talana Museum. And the thing that we don't know is the time that she spend with her family. She says she loves her family a lot. And whenever she was away from them, she used to be homesick. Thank you.

BM: I'm here to introduce Norman Leveridg, our researcher here at Talana Museum. We won't go anywhere without [...]

NL: They mean I have a car

(Laughter)

BM: He like taking pictures [...] and has new ideas during the day [...]

NL: He introduced himself so I don't have to.

(Laughter)

NL: He's a big soccer fanatic. Supports his family. Loves his family. And is a very hard worker. He's also a mysterious person so I don't know what else I can get.

LG: Thank you. Welcome.

GR: [...]

LG: Do you have a team?

BM: Yes. [...]

LG: So we have a lot of family orientated people, and I also have a sense that some of you grew up here and others moved into the area. Thanks for coming. I just want to give you a couple of moments to sign those forms before we go onto the next activity. So does anyone have any questions?

[Signing forms]

Session: What's This & What's The Story?

LG: Right, in front of you, you have a number of postcards. And these are all items that are in the Iziko Museum, now it's their social history collection, previously it was their anthropology collection, and before that it was just their collection. And what I want to do is to um, get into small groups, into threes, four groups of three. Take a couple of minutes to look at the items. The first one we're going to look at is this one. (Holds up postcard showing "pot.") And just think about what you know about it. If there's anything at all. Some things to think about. What is it? How you feel about it? Do you like it? Do you know anybody perhaps who made it?

(Four new people enter room)

LG: Hello. That's OK. Come on in. Take a seat. There's some spaces round here.

LE: Sorry we're late.

LG: Ok, so the first item. In your groups just to take a couple of minutes to think about this item and then we'll give feedback. There's no wrong answers. Do you like it? Do you not like it? Do you know who made it? And do you know what it's used for? Its name. Anything at all about it.

[Breakaway discussions]

LG: OK

GR: OK. Can I? This thing here, this defines the Zulu. It defines the Zulu. If you go to eMakhosini, the beer pot, I can just say that when they built it, the issue was, they have a viewpoint, what do they put on the viewpoint. They were saying let's put a shield and the spear...and they say no, that's not technically Zulu. And they ended up saying that they'll put a beer pot there which was really, it's the cultural, um, what can one say

LE: Symbol.

GR: Symbol. Of the Zulu. OK and there are further things that we said. In the Zulu culture it's very much appreciated for usage and crafts. And we use it. We've all got one. I think even I've got one.

LG: [...]

WM: The item is known as *Ukhamba*. But there's a difference between Ukhamba itself. Ukhamba means the container. But the size differs. There is a small Ukhamba that is called *umancishana*. It's just that is normally used by the head of the family...[...]...And then the very same size, the very same size Ukhamba can be used for eating. The sour milk. *Amasi*. That's what it's used for. And then, lastly, when you ask how I feel when I look at this *ukhamba*, I feel so happy. Why I'm so happy? You know the shape.

GR: I thought he's drunk.

(Laughter)

WM: It's got those beautiful marks. That marks is called [...] teaches you the kind of artist. The artistic way. It's a form of decoration. And then when you look at it, how many people. Most people, I've got more than five. And then where do we see this kind of thing. We normally see at the museum or else when we go on cultural tours or the Zulu weddings or traditional ceremonies. That's where we will find them. But it's also used by the Nguni people. Not specifically say it's a Sotho or so or Shangane. Because everyone they've got their own kind of artists and how they will...and knowing how they make it from the clay and then how long does it take for this clay to become *Ukhamba*. It undergoes certain process where they dug the clay and then they burned it and they put those marks, decoration, even in our case, in the olden days but today they are using certain kind of paintings to make it more modernised. I think we use it because we're Zulus just for sharing because in Zulu culture there was no prejudice in the olden days. They used to share. You bring the big one, called *imbiza*, and then from *imbiza* you can take one for the youngster, for the juveniles, one *Ukhamba* goes for the women, into their hut, then the one goes into the kraal, but all teaches us to share and then that's part of it.

LG: So this item has a lot to say.

WM: There's still a lot to say but I'm not going to break for other people. We've got the researcher (pointing at Norman). We've got guides here, so.

LG: And what about this group here. Do you have anything else you would like to add? How it makes you feel?

SSM: [...] The name of it is *Ukhamba*. It is made of dough.

LG: Can I ask you to spell that?

SSM: D-O-U-G-H.

LG: Can I ask you all to be quiet when someone else is speaking because the acoustics in here are quite difficult. Sorry, Siya. You were saying it is burnt to be strong?

SSM: OK, how does this item make you feel like? I feel like, even though I am not a Zulu, but whenever I see this item I feel like I am a Zulu.

LG: How would you, if you're not a Zulu, how would you describe yourself?

SSM: I am a Sotho.

LG: But this makes you feel like you are a Zulu?

SSM: Yes. And then the next question. Do I like this item? Yes. Have you seen this before? Yes, I have seen this before at home, at the store [...] and then as well as at the museum. Most of the people who are using are normally our grandparents, grandmas. OK, who might use this item? Zulu. And as this guy said, the Ngunis. During their traditional ceremonies. I think that the importance of this item is that they are using this item to store the water and so forth to share.

LG: Thank you very much. And our last group in the corner. Do you have some thoughts to share?

AM: OK, thanks very much.

SW: This is an *udiwo*. It is a medium sized *Ukhamba*.

LG: Can I ask you to spell that for me?

SW: U-D-I-W-O

AM: I think here it shows the expertise. Because here can measure this is hidden, if it is not, it breaks.

MD: Do you like the item? Yes, it's cultural memory. But this is poor quality this one.

LG: Oh, this is poor quality this one? Is there a reason for thinking it's poor quality?

MD: Because of the crack. You can't drink from that. Have you seen something like this before? Yes. Family gatherings.

LG: So you say it's family gatherings and also in museums and heritage places.

PP: Have you heard about this item before? We said yes. We have heard about it in our homes. But for myself...this is the first time I am seeing that item. Who might use this item? We said [...] And going back to that question about where we might hear about it, also from the song [...]

LG: So a specific song?

PP: Yes.

LG: Can I ask you to spell that for me?

PP: (Laughs)

LG: I can get it from you afterwards.

PP: OK.

LG: Does anyone else have anything that they'd like to add?

LE: They are saying, What is significant for me, they are selling in these *spaza* shops, modern plastic ones that are actually thin plastic, even though is mass produced, it's still got the shape, shows some significance that it's kept this shape.

LG: So the shape is the very important part?

LE: It's kept the shape, so even though it's industrialised.

NL: I have two questions that I think only you can answer. Is where was it sampled from? Because various, slight variations depending on which zones. What we find up here in the northern Zululand is totally different from the rest of Zululand. And who was it sampled from? It may be a beer pot of poor condition but it might be a beer pot from a predominant person.

LG: You see now you're leading me into the next part.

NL: Sorry.

LG: No, it's good. So this is the only information that the museum has about this.

NL: And that's my biggest curse I have every day are those cards.

LG: So this is the concern when they start digitising all of the records, this is the only information. That this is a pot.

NL: All you can get from that is it's from Zululand.

LG: Yup. So, everything you just shared isn't there. I looked through the correspondence at the museum to see if there's anything there but the mind set while collecting at that time was that it wasn't important who was using it, who was making it, you just had this Miss Neethling, there's just lost information and trying to put that back together is really difficult. But at least from the information here you can identify it as *Ukhamba*. From talking with people. So thank you.

LE: This is at the South African Museum

LG: Ja, they're all from the South African Museum. Now they're part of the Social History collection. But previously they were all part of the Ethnographic collection. And they're all classified as Zulu, very broadly. But I think what we might find is there's quite a lot of misidentified items.

NL: This is where digitisation and new tech is nice because you have a chance to photograph the product at the collecting site and you can even videotape the ceremony and then attach all that information to the record to make it more.

LG: Alive?

NL: Alive.

LG: And at a couple of other workshops people were saying about, um, how lots of items used in ceremonies with ancestors shouldn't be in a museum either.

NL: That's true.

- LG: Because they have a lot of other associations, how they're looked after is very important.
- LE: And this here it was presented by a Mrs Neethling. I'm sure you know that the [...] at Utrecht at the time was Neethling. So that is also interesting for her. There is also a little book about the Neethlings of Utrecht.
- LG: Thank you very much.
- MM: Yes, I also want to, for your information, when this item is not plastic, even if it has broken, it plays a very important role, using the pieces for eating. They were also used for burning incense.
- LE: I am interested in the history of collecting. I am very much interested in mission work. The church was involved in mission work at that time and them and their wives were very important persons, so probably local people presented them with little gifts and they sort of passed on the gifts that type of thing.
- GR: Just two things. I think we should really be listening to what everyone is saying. Don't talk when someone else is talk 'cause we've learnt a lot. That's the one thing. And the other thing I think, what I'm not finding there is that the beer pot, I mean I've been to some of these functions, it's filled and then it's starts with one person and it goes around the room, each one takes a sip and then he gives it on to the next one. And I think that's really, that rotating, sharing, it's rotating in a circle.
- SA: But the first thing is the person in the room who is, drinks first
- GR: *Phuza*
- (Laughter)
- SA: See what is inside. It's safe.
- LG: So the first person to drink is the host. I'm going to put all of this together into a booklet which I'll make sure all of you get.
- LE: Are you making a recording?
- LG: Yes. Everybody signed away their rights. So I'm going to ask you again in your groups for a few minutes to look at this [holding postcard up] to see
- GR: Can I make a suggestion?
- LG: Yes you can.
- GR: There's four left. Four left. Shouldn't we give each group one item? And otherwise we'll sit here 'til 3'O'Clock this afternoon. If each of the groups deal with each of the item.
- LG: The only thing is that you're all giving very different contributions.
- GR: But then we can add.
- LG: OK. If you're happy to do that, we can do that.

[Discussion over which group has which item. Recording inaudible.]

MM: We were given this item. It is a cultural item.

GR: Can we just ask, does anyone know what it is? That thing. We said Cultural Stick.

LG: Does anybody have a name for this in IsiZulu?

AM: So this type you find it used by people who are sangoma or inyanga.

MM: OK. How does it make us feel? It make us confused.

LG: OK.

MM: Because there is no other explanation or answer.

LG: OK, so just looking at the picture is confusing. You want to know more information. What sort of information do you want?

GR: We want the figure behind who is holding this.

LG: But that's an interesting point. Because all of these items, that they are taken away from the people, that you don't see how they're used in relation to people.

MM: Yes we like the item because it shows the brilliance of artists. What are the questions? Have you seen something like this before. Yes. I have seen it.

LG: But, um, where have you seen it?

MM: We have seen it [...] traditional [...] or traditional attires.

GR: You see. You see Buthelezi carrying it.

MM: Do you, or someone you know own the item? Yes, we know someone.

LG: Buthelezi?

MM: Yes. Yes carrying it [...] also see [...] carrying it [...] There's a young man with a question.

LG: Carry on.

MM: [...]

LG: Have you heard about the item before?

MM: Yes, and the last question?

LG: And, um, why might the item be important?

MM: It is, traditional items. And also we have a question. Two hands.

SM: That point about sangoma and izinyanga. Yes, right there. I have seen that stick, the small stick, usually those people who do poetry.

LG: Poetry?

SM: Yes. Yes. Yes. They usually have this sticks, those art sticks, the decoration, that's how it look like. But I'm not sure why they are holding it.

LG: So the different decorations.

SM: Yes, the different decorations.

LG: So the, ah, different decorations, so that indicates what the person is, or.

SM: Yes.

GR: Does it indicate the kind of, of, the level of the person in the community or does it decorate seniority of the person?

SM: If the person is inyanga, the person will have certain decoration. And sangoma so forth. They can't have the same decoration. The colour changes.

LG: So it indicates their professions?

SM: Mmm.

RS: And this one? Indicates who?

SM: I don't know!

(Laughter)

SL: [...] One traditional ceremonies, I have seen with traditional weddings, the cultural relic, the bride usually has that stick

LG: So this still, this is used today?

SL: Yes.

MM: This one has some

(Laughter)

WM: [...] on this thing, they say that it is cultural stick. And they also called it, it's a knobkerrie. But coming to the point that we are more focussing on, what the Zulu culture has to offer. When we take a close look, that thing is not Zulu cultures. From my point of view, that decoration is all made out of wiring of which in the old Zulu culture there was no wiring. The only decoration that comes with this Zulu culture was only sculpturing. Yes. With this kind of decoration it's more of a [middle] class thing that comes, this wiring comes into existence. And if you say it's been carried, you see most of these things decorated in this formation, you go to the Chinese shop...you just buy it for the decoration not specifically for the certain purpose. Because specifically a Zulu man, used to have a long shaft, stick, and that is where you find that kind of a person and then when he is courting the young maidens he is carrying one, two stick because during the courting process he might come into contact with a competitor and then they have to fight. That's why a young man had to carry two sticks. And then coming down also to that thing. A knobkerrie. Carried by the married man. We call it a [...] they were allowed to carry a knobkerrie.

GR: But could I just ask, to you this is not [...]?

WM: No. You know everything with a round head at the top is called [...] and then you cut that thing out and then you smooth it according to what size and shape you want. In the olden days you see...

MM: [...]

WM: You know, during the African, Apartheid, you were not allowed to carry a knobkerrie which has got a big head. You come across the police and they ask is that head of the knobkerrie fits in your mouth. If it doesn't fit in your mouth they will take it, to the customs because you are in possession of a dangerous traditional weapon.

AM: I think since you are talking about that item, this stick [...]

WM: [...] A stick is just long with nothing on top. This has something on top.

LG: But we're thinking this is not Zulu because of the wiring?

WM: Yes.

LG: Does anyone else have any comments about this?

LE: I just want to say from experience. I was at the Voortrekker Museum in Pietermaritzburg and there were also relatively short stick with a knob like that and there was a little silver plaque from a traveller that claimed it was given to him by King Dingane. So the shape of the short one might even have gone back that far. But it was not decorated at all. And then what I know about the wiring is, I think from the 1870s, or '80s, or late nineteenth century telegraph lines were being put into Zululand, especially after the Zulu war. And when the British occupied the forts and the fortifications, there was a wide network of telegraph poles. I think it might've been introduced into Zulu usage because people took something that was lying around because as you rightfully said before maybe grass and seed for fastening something like a spear. So then with electricity you get different colours of wire to distinguish, well I'm not electrician but there are different types of wire, but this is where Zulus were ingenious actually to take something from another culture and introduce it into their own culture....what is interesting here is that the head and the other part seems as if it is made from copper wiring without the plastic decoration around the wire and I think it's consistent with the type of, erm, what do you call it, the grass work. It's transferred to wiring work as well. I'm not so sure what is the right word to use for that. Um, then, what you can't see from the photograph is the length but assuming it's short, in this one book I showed you there are very different types of walking sticks as well so if it's bigger then it could be a walking stick of course. But what is also fascinating to me is that the head is not a round one like a knobkerrie or staff.

LG: Thank you. Does anyone else have anything they'd like to add?

GR: In your own research, did you find a name for this?

(Laughter as LG shakes head)

LG: OK, this is all we have. Apparently it was found on the field at Isandlwana. Apparently so. In the olden days a lot of the records of provenance, the correspondence went missing over time. So from this period, from the 30s, the letters from this time are missing.

- MM: If it was found at Isandlwana, it was carried by a poet. Yes. It was carried by a poet. Because you cannot fight with this thing. You cannot fight with it.
- NL: Also, this Isandlwana connection. Don't forget the British just brought just about anything and everything with them. And those regiments that fought down in the Eastern Cape, they could've picked this up in the Eastern Cape and brought it up with them so you get now a mix of culture coming in.
- LG: Exactly. I think that's a very good point. There's another item that I showed another group, I'll show you later, and, um, they said, well this isn't Zulu. And possibly what happened is that somebody found it in, in this area, and then decided, oh yeah this is Zulu.
- WM: Ok, getting back to what Norman is saying. Maybe, as such but when you look at the date of 1879 when the object is, the Zulu war, by that time wiring is not much in use. And the only time that we get this thing of over wiring came at the time the Zulus because there used to be the culture on the mining at the time, getting back to 1878, that is when gold was discovered in Johannesburg, then far back in 1863, 1867, that's where the diamonds came from and then knowing from Isandlwana, that this thing, when was it definitely transported to there, because not all the collectors...were looking at what we call quality, to sell the epic of Isandlwana. This is what they want to sell. Because coming from 1929, that's when modernisation has already started and then 1879, I really disagree that cultural stick was there. Because if most of the people who carried the long staff stick and decorated thing [...] Because if it was found on the field of Isandlwana and then was sold or purchased in 1939 that makes it almost fifty years, no close to sixty years, and there's a lot of interaction 1879 – 1929.
- GR: I think we should close down this stick without a name.
- LE: I just want to say, African people mainly from so-called Christian communities around Pietermaritzburg, they also had issue with weapons as well, so it might have
- NL: With regards to that wire width, one thing you have to remember is the British are fighting a lot in Southern Africa, they're putting in telegraph lines and during the second invasion they put in a telegraph line between Dundee and, erm, the Butler River. Within a week it was stolen. So they were using what they found lying in the velds. And what is a telegraph wire. A lovely piece of strong grass lying in the veld.
- LG: Thank you. Yup. OK, our next item that we have is this one.
- WM: OK, well, um, well what we are looking at, we don't have a name for it, but when we look at it, it is one of the [...] fertility doll. Now where do we find this thing. You find this mainly in the museum [...] Fertility doll. And then from our observation we realise that it is not an original.
- LG: Not an original?
- WM: Zulu doll, or depicting any of our Zulu cultural background. It is maybe coming from Namibia or the Masai of Kenya [...] trade with the Portuguese [...] and that's where we find the [...] mix. To me, if you ask me if I like this thing, I

don't like it. Because from the facial shape, there is no, when you look at the facial shape, it is going down like that, and you can see the eyes without the nose and mouth. You might see some kind of [...] tradition of those [...] people [...] their ceremonies. And these certain dolls they're used for these ceremonies and it's at some stage we believe it carries some certain (pressures?) that this doll may possess. Because when they carry it and it complements with their dancing and their kind of work and their ceremonies. And if I can turn it upside down maybe it might act as a drum where [...] we don't know. But it might be some kind of ritual. The colours also on the face, the top part with the eyes it normally blends with their kind of clay that they use. In South Africa we know when you come from here, going down to Msinga or Nqutu, you find the women, the young maidens, when they go on the fields to harvest or do cultivation they put this red clay on their face, ja, as sunscreen or sunblock, so it has become part of the culture. That one is more brownish unlike the one we have in our right here [...] It is importable from foreign countries because our museums around here we normally put our Nguni depicting cultural dollies in our museum.

LG: OK.

WM: That's what we can say.

LG: Ok, so the colours, the shape, those all indicate to you that it's not Zulu, it's something foreign.

WM: Ja. Though maybe Louis might have something.

LE: I just want to add that we're talking about the colours but also the colours of the beadwork, some of it resembles Zulu work, especially, was it the green, and the brown colours were not consistent. Also the yellow. So there's some, something foreign about it. And then also the shape of the doll itself. In Zulu...

NL: Cone.

LE: Cone shape where it represents a lady's dress. So inconsistency in the shape.

LG: So shape, colour. Does anyone have something else to add?

SL: Um, it's a question. Fertility, what do you mean.

NL: Do you want babies?

(Laughter)

NL: You have a ritual and you have that to represent [...] fertility, so you can have more babies.

WM: When you talk about fertility, let's think about our South African flag. How many things when it comes to the plants. Which plants do you see on the South African flag? On the arms, the coat of arms. What do you see there? It's the fertility for the whole of South Africa.

SL: Protea.

WM: Come again. Protea? But there is also this plant that is flowering.

NL: I remember the secretary bird but I don't remember the plant.

WM: But you don't remember, so [...] when you talk of the fertility, you're not speaking specifically about the human, the human being, but how the country developed and when they grow [...] ceremony [...] that's when they go to ask, how do you fertilise our own soil. So you can get a fertile land, a good harvest, that's what they call fertility. And that's when you go to the Indian [...] and then you find [...] and all that. Educate themselves. The doll or whatever. That's why I'm trying to explain the word fertility. Laura you got to pay for that explaining!

(Laughter)

SM: I have a question. If I've got this thing, I could've said it's a sangoma. Right. It's because at the top I see those, er, it's the dreads. And then come down to the, ja, same as the sangoma, izinyama, the beadwork are same colour, I'm not sure, but most of them are and then.

BM: Because most of them are putting some beads, putting some, er, what do you call it [...]

WM: [...] But why we are saying it is a fertility doll [...] now disagreeing that it is sangoma. But bear in mind, sangoma is using just two colours, most specifically is red and white. White is for the luck and red is for their [...]. So the sangomas, either have to slaughter a goat or a chicken [...] They have two priorities. Today [...] the cloak [...] they put the red and then they put the white [...] Find the sangoma with the feathers of supporting chieftdom. Is that going to be from the chicken [...]

(Laughter)

NL: Another thing with the fact this thing could've been collected in Zululand. Because remember with that first part collected by the church, missionaries who travelled throughout Africa and they could've brought that down with them and then when they donated their collections, let's just say the whole lot came from Zululand but there's this mix of other dolls or [...]. And the second thing is, again if it is a fertility doll, certain rituals, when it's preserved in a museum you need to know those rituals of how to look after it. And you might have the problem that only certain people are allowed to use it.

LG: Thank you.

WM: [...] Sotho.

LG: These are the notes that were written by the curator in the '80s saying that maybe there are some similarities with Sotho.

AM: When you have this information, and at the end of the day, what is going to be the reality. This was from 1905, so many years ago, how are we going to be sure that what you put in your thesis is going to be fact, you know factual.

LG: Ummm

AM: Because sometimes with history it has been smeared

LG: Well what I would say is that many of these catalogue cards and this information that has gone into being history and fact are already misleading. I don't intend to

take what we're saying and then make that an alternative truth. But is to exactly look at what are the gaps, what parts might be missing, so that in terms of collecting in the future or looking back, how far can you go to find out information, to verify it.

NL: I think it's very important when you said that the curator filled in where the card was empty is to make it very obvious that the card did not have this information when it was collected and this is what we think. We don't have proof. You've got to state that.

LG: And that hasn't always been stated. And a lot of this information has gone into being accepted as truth and historical facts but what we find is that when we chip away at it as we do today that that's something else we should be questioning. OK, who had this item. OK, your group. That's the one everyone was fighting for.

SM: First off we had an argument because we're not too sure if it's wooden or it's plastic. So we said we thought it's plastic.

LG: OK.

SM: So the name of it is *ukhezo*. Spoon.

Aud: [...]

SM: Can you show the questions?

LG: Yes, sure.

SM: We said the shape it's, er, ideal for eating. We said the sharp end could also be used for stirring pap. And we said also the sharp pointed end it was used for [...].

LG: For the porridge?

SM: Soft porridge. Er, do you like the item? No, I prefer the steel spoon.

(Laughter)

SM: Have you seen something like this before? I have. Do you or someone you know own something like this? I don't know. It's at the museum.

LG: OK, so you've seen it at the museum before.

SM: Er, who might use this item? We said mainly in the olden days [...]

LG: So this would predate?

SM: Predate steel spoons. Why might this item be important? To eat, I think.

NL: With regards to the material it's made of, I agree the photograph's not very clear, but it could be the earliest form of plastic: cow horn. Made from cow horn.

LG: Yep.

NL: And plastic replaced that.

GR: Could I ask, culturally, did the Zulus use a spoon to eat. Because before you got metal, er, steel spoons, I mean you ate the *phuthu*, eating with your hands.

- PP: Yes.
- GR: So were there spoons, or wooden spoons that they used to eat with? That's my question.
- NL: How big is the spoon out of interest?
- LG: It's, it's small. It's about the length of a pen. About this size.
- WM: OK, if you say it is of that size, then I come up with another thing.
- AM: We have not finished. They are helping us but we are not actually finished what we said. If we are talking about Zulu culture, we go back to [...] wooden spoons. But we are confused that it is plastic. We can see here the stomach of the spoon. Which goes into the mouth. It's actually flatish. It's got very smooth. So it's suitable to actually eat something that is soft. *Amasi*. That is sour milk. And then porridge as we have said. It is made here to get into the mouth. And when you draw it out, it won't hurt you because it's you know like. But we also said that it could be that it is another spoon for scooping from one [...] to another. But this is not a spoon for scooping but rather for eating. And you can see here that it is decorated in such a way that it fits into your mouth without actually scratching [...] so the spoon is made soft and suitable to eat and your mouth will be actually take all the food from this spoon because it's not, er, deep. So that's what we had in mind.
- LG: Ok, thank you.
- SM: I would like to ask a general question since there are historians here. What do you define as Zulu culture or Zulu traditions? Is it the conditions around, or is it what the Zulus, or any cultures, they choose to do?
- LG: What do you think?
- (Laughter)
- SM: I say it is the conditions.
- LG: Something I'd like to come back to this afternoon is, um, yeah, what, how do you define that? Why are all these items defined as Zulu? What do they actually mean by Zulu? Which I think is another fantastic point.
- WM: Laura, going from what you have said now that that spoon it's only seven, eleven centimetres, that means it's sort of this size. I would prefer that it's not a feeding spoon, but there's a one kind of a spoon that it's made out of horn, that thing it's called *ijenga*, the one that the old men used to carry when they used to smoke sniff and take it from here but they used it to scoop their sniff and then (sniffs on each nostril). If from the size, 11 centimetres from, I think we can call it *intshengula*.
- LG: Can I ask you to spell that?
- WM: It's for the Zulu man. For smoking. I-N-T-S-H-E-N-G-U-L-A. Ja, that's for smoking sniff. It's for Zulu man.
- LG: If I had prizes then your team would win that.

WM: No we don't need prizes but you supposed to pay for it.

(Laughter)

LG: [...] it was given to the museum in 1948. It was part of a big collection that came, the guy who sent it was living in Australia at the time. He sent a bunch of items that he collected in South Africa in the 1870s and 1880s and also items from Australia and New Zealand. And the information that he sent with them is jumbled and confusing. There are some items in there that are identified as coming from South Africa but maybe they came from Australia.

LE: Is it called the Dunn collection?

LG: The Dunn collection, yeah.

LE: OK, so you know about the Dunns?

LG: Yes.

LE: OK.

NL: What do you do when you come across one that is so obviously wrong?

(Laughter)

LG: So, so far all I've been able to do is tell the curators that.

NL: So it's up to the museum to decide if they're going to change the card?

LG: Ja.

AM: I'm not very happy about this description. Why would they call it a bone?

LG: Why would they call it a bone? I don't know.

NL: Well certain parts of the bone can be worked into a very smooth finish. But it's usually cow horn. Much easier to make it.

LG: Yes. There are some other items in that collection, cow horn.

GR: Talking of the third bowl. That's not bone.

Aud: No, bone.

NL: I think the official name for that section of the spoon is bowl. Just a stupid English thing.

LE: [...] Kept in hair or behind ear [...]

LG: OK, our last item before we go for a break.

RS: This item, *igula*.

LG: It's what sorry?

RS: *Igula*.

LG: Can I ask you to spell that?

RS: I-G-U-L-A...They dry it. They make two holes, the bigger one on top and the smaller one at the top. At the bottom. You use it to keep *amasi*.

LG: What else would you like to say about that one?

TM: [...] should put in the fresh milk from the cow to make *amasi* [...] cow's milk, must first take out the water from the bottom [...]

LG: Anything else you'd like to share?

WM: Can I add something?

AM: Ok, she explained it clearly this *igula* but we ask her why is the case [...]? Actually to us it looked like an inyanga's storage of powdered medicines. Because of that thing, *igula* is like that ...but the inyanga is small and only suitable to store powdered, erm [inaudible word, medicines?]. And those things around it actually have some meaning.

LG: These ones?

AM: Yes.

LG: So they have meaning to the inyanga?

AM: Yes.

RS: Oh, for the different.

LG: And do you know what these particular beads would mean?

WM: It's got its own meaning. It's got its own meaning.

AM: Understanding [...] it's secret.

LG: Thank you.

LE: I would say it's also, ja, also to do with medicine or snuff. My feeling is it's a snuff holder. If I can say [...] my grandmother [...] was given as a present, then my mother used to get to do the socks, you know, she turned it around [...] also the plants.

LG: OK

LE: So something that was taken over by our Afrikaaners and used [...] our family.

LG: Does anyone else want to add anything before we take a quick break?

BM: Just to add about the beads. In olden days we didn't know how to write. The only way to communicate was just using beads. Because beads, their colours, are meaning something.

LG: OK.

BM: So it means those beads knows what's inside.

LG: Ah ha. OK.

GR: Either this, or

(Laughter)

LG: So you'd have to understand that language to understand that.

BM: Yes.

NL: I've just got a question about the calabash tree. When you get the fruits, do you manipulate the fruits in any way or is the fruit naturally that shape?

RS: No it comes in different shapes.

NL: So you don't manipulate. You just use it as it comes naturally off the tree?

LG: So you would choose different ones for different purposes.

WM: Yes.

NL: Some of them have this very very long neck, some of them are perfectly round.

WM: Yes, it was an *igula*, calabash. But coming what Mr Mhlongo has just mentioned that it was a, er, that one, it's the one that used to be carried by the traditional healers or izinyanga. Because when you visit for your consultation with inyanga, those beads that are put around there, it's the [...] that indicates how far this herbal doctor has been trained or qualified and how many at some stages you can find have been covered with animal skin, OK. And know like in Zulu they call it [...] It's the Zulu name for that thing. Because when you visit inyanga at some stage you get to a house and then you start your consultation and then we start communicating with this spirits that are kept there. At some stage you can hear the kind of whistling. They call that thing [...] I don't know if you are happy (Laughter) So those are the things that if you see that are covered by the animal skins [...] a vicious animal like a tiger or a lion's claw, that kind of thing, or the python [...] that that kind of traditional healer has undergone certain kind of ritualised, down to the river, Tugela River, and then they have been sitting there, fighting with the python and then later killing the python. He has been embraced and what, that kind of graduation to be a real inyanga because he's got the python and then that python [...] exactly there. The powers that he possess it's coming from that kind of training. OK, they say I have to stop now. But the colours of the beads, they symbolise everything about how the inyanga and how the what is kept in them because you might find the inyanga's got more than six of these. But he know if you come with a story I have to go with the one with the green bead, the one with the red and that's how to differentiate. Medicine part.

LG: When I went to have a conversation with an inyanga and I showed him this picture and he said this shouldn't be in the museum just like that because it might've been used in certain ceremonies or treatments. So the ones he had, he actually stored them in bowls of oil as well, which is just another question.

NL: Not only the medicine inside could be dangerous but the spiritual connection to it.

LG: Thank you. Time for the break. Do you want to take ten minutes and we'll come back at five past twelve.

[Break]

Session: Retelling the Stories

LG: Ok, let me just go through this with you. OK what I want to do now, we looked at, um, the information about the items and what sort of information we would want to know about them. What I want to start thinking about, we touched on this idea of digitisation and the information being more available. So I want to think about what are the different ways we could communicate information about these items to someone else. So I've given all of you a postcard with one of the items on the front of it. In your groups. So imagine that your group is a museum, you can decide what type of museum you want to be and your name, and you receive this request, um, again whatever way you want to say you received this request. So thinking about who the person is who sent this request, their age, their background, where they are, what would be the many ways you could get the information about this item to that person. And also thinking about if there's any information that you would want to give them, um, depending on how they plan to use it, or if there's certain conditions you'd place on the item, that you want to know how they're going to publish the information, if they need to credit you in some way, what factor do they need to do. But really just focusing on, to begin with, I'm going to give you a piece of paper to put down all the different ways. And also knowing this person, where they come from, their age, what is the best way to get that information to them.

GR: OK, and if you say point two, this member of the public, is that [...] you refer to that.

LG: Sorry. So the person who sent you this request.

GR: Looking for information?

LG: Yes. So there's a postcard. Yep, that's yours. Sorry, the tables are a little smaller than I'd hoped.

Aud: [...]

LG: You need to assign a spokesperson, a scribe. Take ten minutes to do this and then we'll gather feedback.

[Breakaway group exercise]

LG: OK, do you want to tell us first what the request was that you received?

MM: OK. This is the item that we received. "Good day, I am a high school learner at Legon High School in Ghana. I would like to know more about this item for a school project that I am doing. Can you help? Thank you." And then he gave us his name, Kwame Annan. Then he also gave us his email address kwameannan2005@?.com Then he also gave us his number. We don't know whether it's the cell number or a landline. And he also gave us the, um, the postal address. So, if this question is saying what are all the possible ways we might communicate this information to this person. So we thought about the kind of information around the research. And then we thought about how we can share this information. And since he gave us the three ways of communicating the information which is the email address, the number and the postal address, we said we are going to communicate by the email and postal address. But the

second question, we decided that email is the fastest way of communicating, so to the post we might not know the due dates of the, the project that he was given, so we decided not to go with the postage. So we decided to go with the email because it's faster, and it's an easy way to communicate, and there's no costs for either party, since there are no costs involved. No paper or postage. So just use the email. [...] he will say if he received the email or not. Yes, and then the third question, is there any information about the item that you wouldn't share? Yes, there is that kind of information. That kind of information that is protected by copyright, um, yes, those kind of informations. So we won't share that. So we have to communicate with Mr Annan that kind of information that might not be able to get.

LG: OK, thank you very much. Let's give you a round of applause.

(Clapping)

LG: So you're very concerned about the user and getting them the information the fastest way possible in a reliable way. And also, yup, there's no cost to both of you using email for digitising this. OK, next group. Who's going to be your spokesperson. Ah! Spokeswoman. Fantastic.

MD: Do we need to read the postcard?

LG: No, just tell us the name of the person and where they're from, that's fine.

MD: Ok, our name of the museum is The Spoon Museum. Um, Wandile has asked for information about this sniff spoon. Is it a he? He's from Cape Town. OK, number one, list all the possible ways you might communicate the information with the person. Post Office, it takes too long and might get lost. SMS, limited characters. And website, maybe both parties we don't have websites. Visit and meet her in person. Calling, airtime, cost of airtime. And we chose email, email address because it's much faster and we don't know the due date and we can even send some pictures. Second question, oh third question. We would not share origins of this item. We wouldn't share the origins of this item 'cause we're not sure what it's made of. We were debating about what it's made of. It's outdated and replaced by modern products. We would invite her to see, to come and see the item at our museum.

LG: Thank you very much.

(Clapping)

LG: OK, so you also have a concern about how reliably you can get the information to them, how quickly you can get the information there, and also making sure that you only get things to them that you know are facts.

MD: Yes.

NL: Um, a while ago we had an internet service that couldn't take large quantities of information so I had to post the information. And I always put in, please phone when you receive this item. Last one I sent took six months to get from here to Jo'burg.

LG: Wow.

- NL: That's how unreliable our postal service is.
- LG: That is a very long time. OK, Siya and your group. Do you want to go next?
- SM: Ok, should I read this or not.
- LG: If you can just tell us who, if it's also a school learner.
- SM: OK. "I am a school learner in London, England. I would like to know more about this item," which is this item, "for a school project that I am doing. Can you help me? Thank you. Melanie Singh. And there is an email, melaniesingh@gmail.com, and, I don't know, actually an address...OK. Um starting from this, just a quick, briefly to answer these three questions. The best way to communicate with her is to send email. For number one. And then number two, basically, OK, the best way to communicate with her is, we said it's an email. Why? Because it saves money. We save money, we don't have to travel to that person to give them the information. And then when it comes to time, you know, email is just, write that down, all that stuff, two seconds, it's gone. That's the beauty of it. And then the third question, is there any information about the item that you wouldn't share with the public, or conditions you would place on the item? I and my group we said no, because this student actually needs information about this item which is for us to help him, so we wouldn't hold information. That thing is part of history so it isn't something to hide from history. The only thing that would be, could be a barrier to sharing information, it will depend on which language we deliver that type of information and so forth. That's it.
- LG: Thank you. That's great.
- (Applause)
- LG: I think that's a really interesting point about the language and how you get that to your learners. Everything we spoke about today has been in English but if you have someone whose language is not English, how do you cater to that? And so speed, costs, museum are always low, are short on money, right. Thank you. And the last group.
- LE: Our group got the Zulu pot. And it's quite interesting. We got a question from a learner in Mumbai high school in India. And he or she wants to know more about the item for a school project. And the name is...we're not sure if it's a boy or a girl. But in any case, she provided an email and international phone number and then also a postal address. Or actually more a street address than a postal address. So we presume she can also receive post. Firstly, we looked at all forms of communication. So firstly, email will be preferable form of communication. We also said there must be a response app attached to that to ensure the person actually has received the email because sometimes it doesn't go through. Then, um, post, post we are seeing that the whole postal system is unreliable. Because it's slow, it can go to the wrong address, it is not maybe cost effective and because there are postal costs attached to it. Then we can also SMS with the phone number though we first must be sure if it's a smart phone or a cell number or it's just a landline so that's also not so reliable. So one can maybe follow that up through an email. Info and images can be emailed. There are of course many

different types. If you photograph and it has many pixels it can be problematic that it can't be downloaded. But it's an option. And if there's a need for forms, that needs to be signed for instance, for acknowledgement or for payment or whatever, these days you can also fax and email those forms that is acknowledged in legal terms. I think that these days if you sign those documents, for legal purposes is also seen. Then the best way to communicate with this member of the public is through emails and then one can also send other links for resources, websites, blog addresses, and, ja, webpages that's got other information. So email that and link it. And then you might scan documents from your own sources in the museum, or from books, catalogues, research files, photographs etc and even video clips, you can also send that. And this is where the other question comes in. What is the other information you would not share and what is the conditions on sharing the information. We said the cost of items, the value, the storage, where it's being kept, that type of thing. That type of confidential information. And then of course the conditions of the information, what we've seen here, conditions of usage of the books, of the photographs and all those. Must at all time acknowledge your sources, must acknowledge copyright as well, institutional copyright, some even have payment conditions, I know certain types of institutions where you've got to pay twenty rand, fifty rand per photograph, so all those sort of things must be sorted out. Um, also in this case since it's just for a school project there might not be fees included. That is the other thing, for what purpose is it used. If it's for official publications, money may be involved, there is many times all sorts of conditions of payments but that can be very problematic especially with an overseas researcher. And also you shouldn't share reproduction, well that's also a question about not sharing reproductions and about copyright and about whether it's for personal income or not. It is a bit complicated at times.

LG: Yes, that's very true. Thank you.

(Applause)

LG: It's interesting that all of you chose email as the preferred form. Just out of interest, how would you personally receive emails? From your computer or through your cell phone? Does everybody have a smart phone? No. Does anybody have a smart phone that you use to get emails?

NL: Everybody's got a smartphone except me.

LG: But you guys, you would check on your laptop, your computer, before your smartphones? OK so who does have a smartphone, just so that I can get an idea on numbers? Ten. OK, so half. Ja, so digital tools, they are quite useful for getting around but also problems in terms of copyright issues. But also language use and that goes back to how you collected that information in the first place. Thanks everyone. I think you've worked really hard this morning. Hopefully we've got a great lunch now

NL: The other thing I've found with sending information out is, I have one or two thoughts about how to do it. I personally would send everything I find and the person on that side, the researcher, has to decide what they want to use or not.

Whilst some people they take out what they think is appropriate and just send that information across.

LG: OK, so a kind of filter in the process?

NL: Ja. Some people filter it. But I prefer that the person on the other side, they know what they want so they then filter it.

GR: We talked about the same thing. And we said well it depends. If ours was a school child looking for information, whereas if you were having a researcher on the other side that's doing this for study or so then you would send different levels with what you do.

NL: But the other thing you've got to remember, specifically with a school child, is that you're dealing with old documents, so that the wording in a document, on many occasions, you have to tell the parents read the document first. Because the wording in today's standard is very questionable.

LG: Ok, so you've got all those sensitivities around things as well?

GR: Before we started this morning, you had those language choices on the screen. Are they still coming? I was just thinking about these languages that nobody knows, what do you do? Do you try to find something that can translate into one of those languages or do you try to find a person? Or send it in English. English is very much a general in the national language point of view. What would you do if it's from Norway or?

LG: Exactly, or even in South Africa if you have someone whose first language is not

NL: You get Germans, Swedish documents in our archives. Nobody can read them.

GR: Maybe I'll translate them for you.

(Laughter)

LG: OK, thanks everyone. We're going down to Miner's Rest for lunch. Can someone who is working here show us the way? Thank you. And then can we meet back here, the afternoon is much shorter and lighter, for half past one and then we'll be done by three. Thank you very much.

[Lunch]

Session: What's in your Bag?

LG: How are you all feeling after lunch? We'll get through this afternoon quite quickly. So this morning we thought very much about historical items although a lot are still used in certain capacities today. What I want to think about now for a short time is what kind of material culture items you use every day. Items that are important to you. Just as these objects when they were collected were assumed to be everyday items, important at the time of collecting. So very quickly, let's divide into pairs and turn to the person next to you and tell your neighbour about three items that you have with you today or that you normally carry with you, if they're in your bags, or your pockets, or that you would like to carry with you. I'm just going to give you a few minutes to do that. And when we feedback, just choose one item that your neighbour has told you about. Any

questions? OK. Let's start. More time. OK, two minutes, everybody OK with that?

LG: OK, Siya, do you want to kick us off? Do you want to start us off? Just one, yep, just one. OK, we're going to start over this side and Siya is going to introduce.

SSM: OK, her most important one is her phone in case of receiving SMSs, calls, which are [...] emergency. And she shares, she shares her music but that's not too much important.

LG: Sending emails [...] So that's your most important number one item. Can I take a photograph of you with your item? Can I take a photo of you with your cell phone? Thank you. OK, and the three items from Siya. OK, so did everyone hear that, cell phone, wallet and [...]

TM: Mine is my phone [...] and handbag.

LG: OK, thank you.

RS: OK, so Slindi chose cell phone.

LG: Yup.

RS: Cell phone, watch and lipstick.

LG: Ok.

RS: But the most important is her phone because she communicates with her family, especially about her son who is five years old [...] take him to the hospital or whatever he needs.

SN: Um, Rosalind chose cell phone, card, and [...]

LG: Sorry, cell phone, card, and?

RS & SN: Diary.

LG: Ah, diary.

SN: But the most important is her cell phone. She uses her phone for messaging. [...] fetch him from school.

LG: OK, so for both of you cell phones are the most important ones. Can I take a photo of you two with your cell phones? And I need to take one of you Siya as well.

SL: Um, Mpilo she chooses her wallet, [...] and sunglasses.

LG: OK, wallet, phone and sunglasses.

SL: The most important for her is her wallet since, since she uses public transport.

LG: So for carrying your cards and. Can I take a photo of you? Thank you.

MD: ...Three most important things are his [...], his cell phone, his lunch.

(Laughter)

MD: And the most important one is his cell phone because he gets all his, he doesn't want in the morning [...]

LG: OK. So cell phone again. Thank you.

SW: OK, Mr Mhlongo's most important items are his wallet, his cell phone and money. And the one he chose is money because without money you can't do anything [...]

LG: Can I take a photo of you? You don't have to show me all your money. Thank you.

AM: OK, Sandra likes cell phone, watch, lip ice that she's got in her bag. But the most important is the watch that she's holding which was a sentiment from her Mum, her late Mum so that's the very important one.

LG: Thank you. So this is the first item that's had a sentimental value.

HN: [...]

LG: [...] Cell phone.

MM: [...] Cell phone, lipstick, and wallet...social media, WhatsApp. [...]

LG: So both of you, cell phones [...] for researching [...]

HN: [...]

LG: Thank you. OK.

GR: Ok we discussed it and decided each one will present their own.

LG: OK.

GR: So ladies first.

SA: Um, in my bag my items are my cell phone, hand lotion and pack of tissues. OK, cell phone for in case of emergency like [...] my baby. And my brothers. In case something happens at school and I have to go back there. And social media because I'm social media person at the museum. Hand lotion because I'm dealing with archival documents and pictures so I'm washing my hands and so at the end of the day I do need hand lotion because my hands are dry. And pack of tissues [...] just in case.

(Laughter)

SA: Just in case.

LG: [...] Thank you.

GR: OK for me it's very easy. What are the three things. I said brochures, tourism brochures for me is the most important. That's why you all have brochures. And what is called a licence card so that I can get into these things. And the most important is the wedding ring.

(Laughter)

GR: This is, this is for forty-five years. So, when I tried to get it off now, it's a mission.

Aud: [...]

GR: You want the ring?

LG: Thank you. OK. Wilfred.

WM: Ah, thanks Laura. [Inaudible.] Brochures [...] sharing, as well as my brochures. [...] And lastly it's the business card [...] most important part of it [...] people can take it on their business [...] opportunities [...] that's it.

LG: I think you're always working Wilfred. Can I take a photo of you?

GR: You must hold them both sides of your ears.

(Laughter)

WM: Like this!

GR: Make sure you take one with them by his head.

LG: Bornwell.

BM: I've got more than three. [...] phone for communication, smart card and wallet. But the most important is [...] because even if [...] communication.

LG: [...]. Thank you. OK, Norman.

NL: OK. I've got very limited. House keys. Car keys. And this cursed thing. I suppose the most important is the car key. It gets you from point A to point B a lot quicker than we can walk. The car has had various people trying to open it without my permission so I've got key for the one door, key for the second door, key for a third door. (Laughter) So when I open my door I have to think now which key is this door.

LG: [...]

LE: I also said my diary. Though it doesn't go into a pocket. I always lose it and it frustrates my boss because I never know when's the next meeting. And I've got my car keys. And then my, my purse. This is a special purse. What happened is I, these days we've got so many cards, you know bank cards and other little pieces of paper, you know sort of slips, cards that people give me. So I think more than ten years ago [...] castle...van [?] said he will make me a purse specially for my cards. And he has passed away in the meantime. The old purse actually broke right through the spine, so much I used it. So I had another one made via a guy who makes purses but I said to him he must use the same design so, what did I say, that's the one, so I [...].

LG: [...] It's very special for you. Thank you very much.

GR: What's your three?

LG: So mine would be this ring, which a friend gave me. I always wear it, it's a square shape, it's satisfying to twist if I'm presenting or something that I don't

really love doing. It's sort of a comfort. Also my cell phone because my, I have a one year old baby so I like to be constantly on call if something happens with him. And then I think also the bag itself. Most of my bags are bags I've bought somewhere that's sentimental. Thanks for asking.

LG: Are you wanting to get a cup of tea now or are you happy to keep going for a few minutes?

(Sounds of agreement)

Session: Your Museum

LG: OK, so if we get back into those groups of four, this is drawing on that question we had about what does it mean to be Zulu. What I'd like you to do is think through all of the items today, the present day ones and the historical ones, and just think about, um, all of the words and associations you would use for describing your community. So what we've realised is that maybe not everyone here identifies themselves as Zulu and you identify as lots of different ways and how you would describe your community. Is it a historical community, an inclusive community, proud, are you Zulu, are you South African [...]. What are the words you would use to describe yourselves if you were introducing yourselves to a new audience.

[Breakaway groups]

LG: OK. Mpilo, so you want to start us off with your group? Just shout it out and I'll write it down.

MD: The words that we

LG: Yup.

MD: Educated.

LG: Educated. Yup.

MD: Middle Class.

LG: Middle Class. OK.

MD: Religious. Rich or poor.

MD: [...]

LG: What was that sorry?

MD: [...]

LG: Criminals? OK.

MD: Cultured and uncultured. Young and old.

SW: [...]

LG: Shall we separate those.

AM: [...] We are still writing on that one but we started here and we said all these, hang on, these races here, Africans, [...], whites, Indians, Chinese. Then we said we have history.

LG: History. Yup.

AM: Monuments.

LG: Yup.

AM: What else.

LG: OK, thank you.

BM: [...] Diversity.

LG: Diversity. OK.

BM: Diverse culture.

LG: OK.

BM: In diverse culture we're talking about Zulu culture, Sotho, Swazi, Indian, English and [...] German.

LG: Is that right, Zulu, Swazi, Sotho, German?

BM: [...]

LG: Cohesive what?

BM: Cohesive living.

LG: Cohesive living.

BM: [...]

LG: Sorry, can you just?

BM: Mining.

LG: Mining?

BM: Industrial.

LG: Industrial.

BM: [...]

LG: [...]

BM: [...]...cultural values. And then nature [...]

LG: Birding. OK.

LE: And game.

BM: Game.

BM: And grassland.

LG: Grassland.

BM: And that's all.

LG: Thank you. That's great.

GR: You want us. OK. Our first word is Zulu.

LG: Zulu. OK.

GR: That's the culture, traditions, all the, whatever version of Zulu. Second one is diverse communities.

LG: Diverse. Yup.

GR: Zulu, Afrikaans, English, German. Focus.

LG: OK.

GR: Third one was heritage. And tourism destination.

LG: OK.

GR: Next one is the wars and the battlefields.

LG: Battlefields.

GR: Then we had poverty.

LG: Poverty.

GR: We've got water shortages.

LG: Yes.

GR: And then I think you've got mining on there but we've got coal mining.

LG: OK, mining and coal mining.

GR: Coal. Ja. That's ours.

LG: Thank you very much. And last group, do you have something you want to contribute to that?

SM: Ah, we said it is a large population.

LG: Large population.

SM: [...]

LG: OK, so back to the migrant labour. OK, yeah.

SM: [...]

LG: It's tough going last, everyone's already taken.

SM: Educated.

LG: Yup.

SM: [...]

LG: OK, so they're [...]

SM: [...]

LG: OK, thank you. So, so the last thing I wanted to look at, just as a final exercise, was thinking about everything you said here about your community, how you would possibly do an exhibition about that that represents all of these things. And the reason I wanted to show how complex it is when we begin to think about our communities is precisely that a lot of old museum exhibits, um, they were attempting to show a snapshot of the community as if that was everything about the community and instead it's changing all of the time. So from what we've had today, from the historical items that we've looked at, the items that you all identified as being very important to yourselves, um, and anything else that you might have at home or [...], um, think about which items you would put in that exhibition if you were to try and represent your community through something like this. Would anyone have any answers for that? Is there something you would like to put into that?

GR: For the exhibition, you talk of something unique. Is it not in every other museum? Which makes it special.

LG: Yep. Special for your community. It can be something that you find elsewhere but [...]

SL: I would say that something I have never seen would be taxi industry.

LG: The taxi industry?

SL: It's something that [...]

LG: So you might want to put a taxi into the exhibition. Yes. OK.

(LE claps)

LG: It can be a huge exhibition. Doesn't have to be small.

GR: Zulu culture.

LG: OK, what would you do for that?

GR: To do a total, because I think this is the most important culture of this whole area. Whether it's cultural or. I would say inclusive Zulu culture.

LG: And that would be *Ukhamba*, what would you say?

GR: The Zulu royalty. What did we have here? The culture, the traditions. So really focus on Zulu culture.

LE: I was thinking maybe...Zulu traditional house. That would actually show more of it.

GR: They've got one at the Ondini Museum in Ulundi.

LG: Yes, ja.

GR: Where they've got the hut and then everything going with it. The cattle. And that is a major attraction for tour guides explaining how you're going to act if you're

a male, which side you're going if you're a female, which side, these little things.

LG: And then in terms of bringing that up to date as well?

GR: You end up with the taxi industry.

LG: So yeah that would be, what you're saying is that's what you have today?

LE: [...] maps [...] I think a map exhibition. It shows you how a place has developed. Place names. And the development of the environment. Because the various maps also show various things. Like traditional herbs maybe, or contact perhaps, or maybe old Zulu [...] traditional settlements...so a sort of timeline. Maps.

LG: And what about?

GR: Battlefields. You must have battlefields, maybe re-enactments like they have here at Talana, once a year there's a re-enactment. You've got the same at...Isandlwana. So I think that would be a special thing. But battlefields generally I think this is the best known battlefield area in South Africa.

MM: I would say link the museum to the school's curriculum.

LG: To the schools?

MM: [...]. So that, um, the schools actually [...]

LG: OK. And so sort of more in terms of it being it's not just fixing a community in the past, so we said the taxi industry, the cell phones, would you want to put something like that in as well?

MD: Yes.

GR: What would we do without them!

LG: I know.

LE: We actually had a discussion about national or modern items. I mean I've been donating my old cell phones to the museum. And we were talking about computer screens. Everyone is throwing away old computers and within ten, twenty years you won't be able to find a twenty, thirty-year-old computer [...]

NL: We're still using twenty-year-old computers.

MM: [...]

GR: [...]

AM: [...] Especially in fact...political dispensation. Because all is governance, Government. Political. Because we lose touch if we don't have a clear understanding of what we can [...]

LG: OK, and how would you put that into an exhibit? It would be on labels or something distinct?

AM: It can be labels, it can be charts, it can be pictures. It can be videos that are showing the [...]

LG: Thank you.

SL: [...]the muti that you buy at the roadside. And with politics, most exhibits tend to focus on [...] oral story telling.

LG: Somebody did a nice exhibit at Ondini in Ulundi on actually all of the local female heroes from the area. It was nice.

MM: When we talk about culture and religion. Religions and culture.

LG: So religions as well. What about the ladies? What are your thoughts? Any specific items that you think would need to go in to represent a female point of view? I want to know if there's anything from a women's perspective that you think should be included.

GR: [...]

MM: [...]

LE: I know I'm a white male. But what's interesting for me about African women especially is many times at the shop or outside wherever I will always tell a lady she's got such interesting hair style because African women are doing most interesting and I will take a photo so I have an archive of the ladies that I've photographed. I'm just thinking because last year there was this big thing about a school girl who actually had [...] there was a lot of criticism. Maybe there must be something shown on women's rights and especially with hair. I don't know. It's just something I've always been wondering about. Does your hair actually tell something about, your message, why? It's a sort of mystery to me.

LG: What would you ladies say? What would you say?

MM: Look at how the different cultures, how they are bringing up the children.

LG: Children. OK.

MM: What I'm saying is we Africans and you as whites, it may be different what we are teaching our children from a young age [...]

LE: But I think it's about cultural practices as well. What does Africanness mean? Let's say if you say hairstyle. It's just a mystery to me, I would like to.

GR: That could be part of the focus on the Zulu culture.

LG: Ladies, what's your answer? Do you want to?

GR: Can the ladies stand up so we can see their hairstyles?

(Laughter)

LG: You also have the right to silence!

AM: Dress. Dress codes.

LG: OK. So this is going to be a mammoth exhibition we've got going on. OK. Thank you very much. We'll call it a day at that point so that you can have some time to get some chocolate biscuits and a drink before we go up to Talana Museum. And if anybody hasn't filled in the form...and some people need to

Speak with me about transport, we'll do that now. And otherwise just thank you very much. *Ngiyabonga kakhulu*. Thank you for your time.

(Clapping)

END

Appendix 2.4. Ulundi Workshop Transcript

Workshop 4: Objects, Cultures, Stories in Museums

KwaZulu Cultural Museum, Ulundi

4th April 2017

Facilitator:	Laura Kate Gibson	(LG)
Participants:	Nontokozo Dlamini	(ND)
	S. Ntombela	(SN)
	Dumisa Mfakazeleni	(DM)
	Isaac Mthimkhulu	(IM)
	Winile Ngema	(WN)
	Nonhlanhla Mpungose	(NM)
	Snothile Dube	(SD)
	Zakithi Mthembu	(ZaM)
	Zinhle Mabaso	(ZiM)
	Bongiwe Dube	(BD)
	Lungile Ndlovu	(LN)
	Zandile Xulu	(ZX)
	Busi Ntuli	(BN)
	Sphelele Ntombela	(SpN)
	Thobile Mbatha	(TM)
	Landeleni Khoza	(LK)
	Zizile Khoza	(ZK)
	Zameka Yamile	(ZY)
	Sipho Vilakazi	(SV)
	Nontobeko Gumede	(NG)
	Group response	(Aud)
	Unidentified participant	299(PP)

START

Session: Welcome and Introduction

LG: OK, do you need a couple of minutes? Oh, you're good?

ND: We're done

LG: You're done. OK. At the front, would you like to start?

ND: Hi, my name is Ntokozo Dlamini, my neighbour's name is Ntombela. Eh, his favourite thing is food and what I do not know about him is [...]

(Applause)

SN: Hi, my name Sbu Ntombela. What I didn't know about my neighbour is that her name is Ntokozo and she loves spending time with her kids and she loves laughing

LG: Sir, would you like to go?

DM: Hello, my name [...] my neighbour's name is Isaac Mthimkhulu. He really loves gardening. He stays in his garden, harvests and sells his goods to us.

LG: You could even present right where you are if you like

- IM: I'm Isaac Mthimkhulu and my neighbour is Mfakazeleni Dumisa. He loves comedy and he enjoys working, bricklaying and doing work at home. Thank you.
- WN: Hi, my name is Winile Ngema. My neighbour is Nonhlanhla Mpungose. She loves Maskandi music, and she writes poems. She loves talking to people and making conversation and counselling young people on ways of life.
- NM: Hi, my name is Nonhlanhla Mpungose. My neighbour is Winile Ngema. She says she loves Gospel music and she loves going to church. She also listens to Maskandi music because she loves it's message and she loves babies and talking to young kids.
- SD: Hi, my name is Snothile Dube and my neighbour is Zakithi Mthembu. And she'll introduce Zinhle. She loves laughing and church. There is nothing I don't know about her.
- ZaM: She loves her kids and also what we didn't know about her is that she is now engaged
- ZiM: Hi, my name is Zinhle Mabaso. I'll introduce my neighbour Snothile Dube, she loves talking and laughing and food of course
- A01: Hi, my name is [...]. My neighbour is Zizile Khoza. She loves Maskadi music and staying at home with the kids. She also loves cooking; we eat her place and she loves making steamed bread.
- BD: Hi, my name is Bongiwe Dube. I'll be introducing my neighbour Lungile. She loves Zulu traditional food, going to church and other Zulu activities like Zulu dancing.
- LN: Hi, my name is Lungile Ndlovu and my friend here is Zandile Xulu. She loves Zulu dancing and laughing.
- ZX: Hi, I'm Zandile Xulu my neighbour is Bongiwe Dube loves going to church, traditional food and music, that's all.
- BN: Hi, my name is Busi Ntuli, my neighbour is Sphelele Ntombela and she says she loves her family a lot and also she didn't know that she loves dancing, she moves [...] as you can see how she is here.
- SpN: Hi. As mam'Ntuli has said, my name is Sphelele Ntombela. I'm here to introduce her. She is mam'Busi Ntuli. She has six children. I didn't know that she got married very young in 1987 to bab'Ntuli and that she loves her family very much; it's everything to her.
- LG: OK, has everyone been introduced? The people who've just joined us, do you like to just stand up and tell us your names?
- SpN: To those who just arrived, this is Laura and she will be facilitating the workshop today, she would like for those who just joined us to introduce themselves as we have just done.
- TM: Hi, my name is Mbatha. I love being with people.

LK: Hi, my name is Landelani, Khuzo Ngema, I love talking and laughing with people, I just love being with people

PP: Hi, my name is maNgema Mdlalose, I just enjoy chatting and I love my work, people and my colleagues

LG: Thank you. Has everyone been introduced? Are they reluctant?

Aud: Yes!

PP: Hi, I'm [...]

LG: Welcome everybody. This is a breakthrough, lots of different people. Just before we go onto the first activity, can I ask that you have one of these forms in front of you, with the boxes on. If I could just ask you to have a look through that for a couple of minutes and if you're happy with it, to sign it and your neighbour could be your witness. And if there's anyone who doesn't have a form, just let me know and I will get one for you.

[Filling forms and low discussions]

LG: If people need more time, we can do this in the break, or at lunch.

SpN: Ok, we will continue reading and signing later. Laura would like us to continue, maybe do it during the break

Session: What's this and what's its story?

LG: OK, let's move onto the next activity so we can wake up a little now you're done with the administration. What I would like you to do now, we're going to look at some items, which you should all have a pile of these in front of you. I'm going to ask you to divide into four groups, which I think will be five people in each group. What I would like you to do is to have a look at this item first of all, that is here in front of you. And in your groups just to think about this. What do you think this item is? How does the item make you feel? Whether you like the item. If you've seen something like this before. Do you know someone who owns an item like this? Who might use the item, who might've made the item, why it might be important? Just have a talk about that in your group about five minutes and we are going to feed back. Does everyone have a group?

SpN: OK Laura would like us to divide ourselves into group. (Translates as above.)

LG: And each group will need to nominate a spokesperson

SpN: And each group will nominate someone to deliver the presentation up front

LG: Thank you very much

[Group discussions]

LG: Ok, do you need a couple more minutes?

Aud: Yes.

LG: You have lots to say, that's great.

BN: Can I start?

LG: OK.

BN: OK, like I've said already, my name is ma'Ntuli. I am here to talk about the matter of *ukhamba* (clay pot). OK, what is *ukhamba*? *Ukhamba* (*imbiza*) it's actually *ukhamba* or *imbiza*, we can all see right? This one we call *imbiza*, it's not *ukhamba* because of its wide mouth. What then is the use of *imbiza*? The use of *imbiza* is to brew beer. What is it made of? It's made of clay, right.

Aud: Yes.

BN: OK, before we brew the beer, we first have *umncindo*. We're talking about *umncindo* (mealie porridge) which is a type of porridge which is used to make the beer. OK, then we put the porridge in the *imbiza* and then it cools off so that it can seal any cracks in the *imbiza* from the inside that might otherwise means the *imbiza* leaks. OK, so then when we remove the porridge from *imbiza*, the *imbiza* is sealed by the cooled porridge, and then we return the cooled porridge back into the *imbiza* and then we put *imthombo* to brew the beer. I think it's something of that sort.

(Applause)

LG: Does someone else have something to add to that? OK.

SpN: So we did not look at how wide the mouth was, so we called it *Ukhamba*. But when mam'Busi explained she called it *imbiza*, but we called it *ukhamba* which is used for men at home to drink beer when there is an event or when they are just at home. It is made of *umumba* (clay) but when the clay is still hot and if you want to decorate it you use a stick to make the design. That is what we said from what we found out.

(Applause)

NM: I'm Nonhlanhla Mpungose. What I grew up seeing the *ukhamba* for is...we also saw it as *ukhamba* but we are glad to learn that when it has a wide mouth it is call *imbiza*. Our fathers or brothers or just at home, they used to make *maas* (sour milk) in the *Ukhamba*. I think it made it taste better from the *ukhamba*.

(Applause)

LG: Siyabonga. And our last group, do you have something to add?

BD: We also noticed the size of the mouth and concluded it was *imbiza*, and we explained that *imbiza* is made of clay and it is heated up so that it can harden, and when it's hardened...we didn't think about the fact that you usually add *umncindo*, so that it doesn't break and spill the beer. All we knew was that when it's *imbiza*, you add *umncindo* and add *umthombo* (sorghum grains), which is the brewing process and then you get beer as the final product.

(Applause)

LG: Thank you. So what I wanted to show you is that from just that picture you managed to provide all of that information. So at the museum, the only information they have about this is on this card. They just call it a pot.

BN: Pot! Just a pot?

LG: They don't have anything about how it's made, who made it. They tell us that is was donated in 1908 by a Miss Neethling, and that's all that there is. So otherwise everything else about this pot is just [...] So are we agreeing that it's called *Ukhamba*?

Aud: Yes.

LG: OK, so let's just do one more of these together. This one. If I could ask you just to do the same in your groups. What you think about this? Do you want me to put the questions back up again?

SpN: Yes please.

LG: OK.

[Breakaway discussions]

ND: OK.

LG: Are you ready for feedback?

ND: Yes.

LG: OK.

ND: Hi again, my name is Ntokozo Dlamini. This is *isilulu*. It is made of grass. Here...they call it a grass-basket in English, OK. Here you place things that do not rot easily, like mealies, beans...grain like foods. You cannot place tomatoes in here because they spoil easily. So it's hot and it's made of grass.

DM: No, it's not hot, it's ventilated, things last for months in there.

BN: Yes, but not tomatoes.

ND: Only grains. Thank you.

SpN: My group has asked me to come again. This *isilulu*, it is made of grass, *intumo*.

Aud: *Intungo*.

SpN: Oh, *intungu*.

Aud: Yes.

SpN: A grass.

BN: A type of grass.

SpN: *Isilulu* is used when our mothers come back from harvesting the fields and come back with the food and they place it in the *isilulu*, but grain food like mealies, beans etc. *Isilulu* is not warm but cold because it is made of grass. When they get *intungu*, they plait it into *isilulu* and place their food in it for years without spoiling, so it's basically almost like a fridge.

DM: Air does come through.

SpN: Yes air does come through, so it doesn't spoil.

(Laughter)

LG: Busi, you have something to add?

BN: Ok, Busi again. Here we have *isilulu*. *Isilulu* is made of grass, the grass is called *intungu*, OK. What is the importance of *isilulu*, what is its use? It's to place grain foods like beans, sorghum, mealies, or something like that. OK, why these things? This is because of the way it's made, it is able to get air into the inside, so that what's inside doesn't spoil. Yes, it's the way that it's made, and it even has a lid on top.

ND: Hi again. This is called *isilulu*. It's made of a grass called *intungu*. *Isilulu* stores grains like beans, mealies, sorghum, cowpeas, Bambara groundnuts, so that it does not spoil because it is cold, it has a fridge effect. The use is that the food should not spoil, because food like beans and mealies do not quickly finish...and these insects called *indundundu* [weevils] *indundundu* do not come in here, because it's like a fridge, it is cold. Thank you.

LG: Ok, our last group, do you have something to add, or questions?

ZK: Hi, my name is Zizile. Our group also agreed that it's *isilulu* and that it is made of grass. We can all see that it is made in such a way that it stores mealies, it stores bambara beans and all that does not spoil. We wouldn't put tomatoes in here because they would spoil.

LG: Does anybody have questions? Let me show you now what they say. So I thought it might be interesting because it's from Mahlabatini, which is just up the road. OK, so it was given by Mrs Nxumalo and she used to run a trading store back in the 1960s up in Mahlabatini. And apparently, so it does not say here, but when I was looking at the correspondent, this one that you have a photo of was made by some school children and given to Mrs Nxumalo by Mr Sibisi who was a school teacher up the road. But we don't know anything else, unfortunately. So thank you for all of your contributions. They were great. So just because of time and other things, we have four items left, so if each group takes one item to look at and then presents it to the rest of group and then you can contribute when you give feedback.

LG: Remember there is no wrong or right answer.

[Breakaway discussions]

LG: It doesn't matter if you don't know what it is. OK, let's start with our group here. You have this one, hey? I'll put it up there. Does everybody know this?

BN: Yes.

NM: It's Nonhlanhla again. I'm going to talk about *impepho* [incense]. *Impepho* is a tree that grows wildy. When it's fully grown you can take it and fold it up and leave it to dry up. You can use it to communicate with your ancestors *emsamo* (sacred/prayer section of home), you burn it *emsamo* and when it smokes up you say what you say to your ancestors. It is also used by twins, maybe if one is not feeling well, they can burn it, boil it and bath with it. Also, if you have a headache, you burn it and inhale it. Others use it when they have a toothache. They are things

called spirits, others use it for spirits, they can burn it or bath with it and they can get better. Traditional healers/diviners also use it to connect with their ancestors.

SpN: I have question. You said this is *impepho* and you burn it and talk with your ancestors. So can I take it as a girl or my brother and use it, I feel like I want to just talk to my ancestors?

NM: Most of the time it is used by an elderly person, a man, not women; a man or eldest brother has the right to speak at *emsamo*. Maybe as time goes and there are no longer elderly people, you can maybe ask home, it's usually a man not women, who speak at *emsamo*. Maybe also with *isangoma* (*Traditional healers/diviners*) because you have female *sangoma*. I think it's allowed there because they speak as the spirits lead.

SpN: Let's say there is no male in this home and we are all girls, what can we do?

NM: They will need to be an aunt, an elderly person, one that the ancestors know, they will have to announce/introduce themselves. "I, Nonhlanhla" [...] let me use myself as an example, at home when I need to do things there, because my parents are no longer alive, and maybe my family is far and there is something I need to connect with my parents for, I can, because I am married, to go to *emsamo* and say "mom and dad here is this or that...I am Nonhlanhla and I want to report this or that..." because not just anyone can speak at the *umsamo*, a person can be family but you still have to check if they have a right to speak at *umsamo*.

DM: Who taught you about this, you Zulu people, who taught you about this?

NM: With regards to *impepho*, as a current descendant, I grew up with these things being done; I cannot point out a specific person who taught me, I just grew up around it and learnt from there.

ND: Wait, it seems like there are two types of *mpempho* there that are different. The one on that side seems different, I don't know it and the one on the other side is the one I'm used to, what kind is that one?

NM: Though I can't explain it, you are right, they do look different, can I have someone who knows answer that?

LK: They are different, the one on that side is the one that we're used to, and the other one is called '*inkonjane*' [...] they are used similarly, it depends which one you're used to or for which purpose you're using it for.

ND: Can I ask a question sis'Nonhlanhla, you're describing *impempho*, right? They said twins can't use whichever, which one do they use between the two?

NM: From my knowledge they use the normal one, I'm not sure of its name (the thorny one?) not the other one, the one that has that pungent smell.

(Applause)

LG: Thank you. Let me show you what they said. So, yes, they said one of them is a *impepho* and the other one, I don't know if you'd agree with this. So they were also bought at Mahlabatini just up the road. This one it says is put on the hearth to

scent the hut. One of them is used by chiefs and the other one is just used by ordinary people. But you're saying it'd be *sangomas*?

Aud: Yes.

BN: No, maybe if they say chiefs, maybe *amakhosi*...*amakhosi* is talking about twins [...] not chiefs.

LG: I think you give them too much credit. Does anyone volunteer to go next? OK, thank you Busi.

BN: I'm going to talk about *ixhama*. *Ixhama* goes by three names: *ixhama*, *isibhamba*, *isfociya*, three names. The use of *ixhama* is for women when they have just given birth, firstly, so as to bring the body back to its original figure. Secondly, it is used by women as part of their traditional attire, a woman who is married, for her to beautify and attire herself. As we see *ixhama* like this, if you're using it after giving birth, you have to cover it with fabric so that it doesn't hurt you when bringing your tummy back into place.

LG: Does anyone have questions for our group here? Do you have any idea for which year it's from?

BN: Sorry.

LG: How old it is?

BN: It's from long-long ago.

LG: Long ago. OK, I'll tell you what they say. So this was also made in Mahlabatini for Mrs Nxumalo. Sorry you have something?

DM: Yes, when black people were inventing, and when they saw after giving birth that the tummy flapped, they came together to invent *ixhama*.

LG: And would you say this is the correct name for it? *Isifociya*?

Aud: Yes, *is'fociya*.

LG: Ok, we agree on that. I just wonder who made it, all we know is that Mrs Nxumalo of Mahlabathini she got it [...] so someone from here was making it, but that information is gone. Thank you. Would you like to go next? You got the tough one, I'm sorry.

BD: Here, actually it doesn't look like it's from the Zulus. If I observe properly it looks like *ishung* (*snuff-box*) or a doll. I'm not sure or a snuff-box, I'm not sure; I don't think it's Zulu.

LG: Everyone I've shown this to says it's not Zulu.

Aud: Yes.

LG: Does anyone have questions?

BN: Please show us.

LG: Ok, so they say it's Zulu, that it was purchased, we don't even know where this lady comes from, by Van Huuven in 1905. But everybody that I have shown this

picture to from KwaZulu Natal, or from KwaZulu, say it's not Zulu, it's maybe Sotho, or some people say it perhaps comes from further up on the East coast of Africa. But I just think that it's interesting that somebody decides that it's Zulu way back and now it just keeps being told that it's Zulu and then you bring it back and people say it's not.

BN: Something similar like dolls, it is made by somebody, Mrs Mkhwanazi, they did this dolls like this. Just doll.

SpN: In our collections we do have this kind of. But not from KZN, it's made of wood and beads

LG: Ok, because this is the other thing, because they never record the date it was made we just know that it came to the Museum in 1905 but I don't know when it was made. OK, thank you very much, and the last group, you had this one hey?

SpN: Is it a *Isxembe* or *ukhezo* [wooden spoon]? It looks like *isxembe*.

LG: Just pretend like you didn't see that.

SpN: Now it's actually clear to me.

LG: What did you first think it was?

SpN: We thought, it's a spoon, OK, it's *ukhezo* or *isxembe*. We say so because maybe it's *isxembe* but looks small because of the picture.

Aud: [...]

It's made of wood, it's for eating, the men eat *maas* with it and dish with it and the kids also, but the kids eat with it by dishing into their hands and eat from there and pass it on when eating Maas.

LG: So now you wanted to change?

(Background commotion; baba falls off a chair)

LG: Ok, Sphelele, so you wanted to revise your idea?

SpN: Ok, eh it's just that I do not know what you call it in isiZulu, it's usually small [...] and is used for snuff.

ND: *Intshengula*?

SpN: I also don't know what it's made of, bone or what? But it's a small spoon and you use it to spoon snuff.

IM: Cow horn

SpN: Oh, horn. This thing it's made of horn. For the snuff.

LG: Does anyone have anything they want to add to that?

BN: Yes, this is a wooden spoon, not just a snuff spoon, it's a wooden spoon. It's *ukhezo* to eat sour milk from the clay pot. The snuff spoon is too small, but this one is bigger than.

SpN: Is this not small ma? I think it looks small if you look carefully. Is this one not small? It looks a bit small, I think we are being confused by the picture. OK, it means it's a snuff spoon.

LG: This one is small.

BN: This one is too small? OK, it means a snuff spoon.

LG: I agree with you. Do people still use snuff spoons or is it something very old?

SpN: Something very old.

LG: And would men and women use it?

ND: Both.

LG: I'll show you what they say about this one. They say it's a snuff spoon. It's small. But it was given by, collected somewhere in Zululand, we don't know where, by a guy who was in South Africa then moved to Australia. And he sent a whole collection from Australia to Iziko Museum and some of his documentation is very dubious. Do you guys have any of this in your collection?

SpN: Yes we do.

LG: And it's from this region or?

SpN: From this region and other regions.

LG: Ok, great thank you very much. OK I think we'll just have a break now.

Aud: OK.

LG: The tea is there, the kettle is boiling, we'll get going [...] I've got some cakes for you...do you want to take ten minutes, take ten minutes and then we can come back at 12:10.

SpN: We'll take a break and come back to continue.

[Break]

Session: Retelling the Stories

LG: OK, let's move on to our next activity, which we'll keep short so we can go for our lunch soon. So in your groups everyone has got a big piece of paper, some big pens and also some postcards with an object on it and at the back of that postcard is a message. It's in English, I'm not sure if anyone needs help. I want you to imagine that in your groups, you're a museum or organization and you have received this request and to think about how you would answer it, and more how you would get the answer to the person based on the story that you've been given in that postcard. Think about the different possible ways you might be able to get the information to them, and then based on what you know about that person decide what you think would be the best way. And then also think about all the information we have discussed earlier around those objects, if there's anything you wouldn't share about that item or any sorts of conditions you can put, maybe they might need to pay for something, or to acknowledge something, something like that. Is that OK, so does it make sense to you to explain?

SpN: OK, Laura gave us postcards and at the back there is a picture of an item we discussed and in front is a message and we will have to help the people who wrote us the message. Our group got a message from a researcher from the University of British Colombia. He wants us to help him understand what he bought, he wants information about the item; what it is made of, what it's used for etc. So that he can know more about that item that each group has. So we will write all the information we can think of, what it's made of, how it is used, when, everything, so that the people from there can be helped and have a clearer understanding of what the thing from each group is. I think it is clear?

Aud: Yes.

LG: So you have got one person to write down your ideas on paper and someone else come and present.

T: Ok, so you will have one person who will write and one who will present here in front. Did you get writing material?

LG: Take five minutes.

[Breakaway discussions]

LG: OK, do we have a group that is volunteering to start? Do you want to come to the front with me? OK, we've got the first group that's going to introduce. What was your story?

NM: Can I read this?

LG: Yes please, thanks.

NM: Our postcard is written like this, "good day, my grandmother recently passed away and I found this object in her storage room. She lived in South Africa with my grandfather who was a missionary at the Benediction Mission in kwaNongoma. I would like to know more about it, can you help? Milana McCormack, Edinburgh.

LG: Just an address. OK. Which country is she from?

NM: From Scotland. We will talk about *isilulu*, we are talking about this picture we found in the postcard, that we will send him a message about this *isilulu* that we found in this postcard, that we will send him so that he may know more about *isilulu*. *Isilulu*, *isilulu* is made of grass called *intungo* it is made to preserve traditional food that is harvested from the fields, for example mealies, beans, jugo beans and sorghum and more that does not spoil, it is made so that the food stays for longer without being interfered with. The way it is made is that it keeps things cold.

LG: So how would you send the information, how would you contact the person?

NM: Oh, where he is meant to contact us? Like my phone number or address?

LG: So you would phone this person or you would write to them?

NM: If he would like to contact us, our number is [...]

LG: No OK, so you would prefer to

- NM: Our number is [...]. Our name is, the name of our group. What will we call our group? OK can we will send him an email or SMS.
- LG: OK, *siyabonga*. Group two. You can just say the name and the country.
- SpN: Alright, we got a postcard or rather a message from researcher Dr Hannah Turner. She asked if we could please send her information about this picture [holding the picture up] what this is, what is its use, how it works, who uses it. And so when we looked at it as a group we agreed that it is a *intshengula* it is used for smoking, people use it to scoop their snuff, it is used by *sangomas*, as we know that *sangomas* are the majority snuff smokers. It is also used by grannies, elderly people, both grannies and grandpas also use *intshengula*. It is made of a cow's horn, the horn is carved and fashioned to be small and of a design that a person wants. It was used in the olden days, I don't think people still use it, even when you come across *sangomas* they won't be using it but sniffing from the snuff-box, or like how *Mkhulu* showed us that he just uses his nail. Some people use their nails. So, we will send the information through email address to Hannah. That's it.
- LG: Thank you.
- BN: Ok, this is Busi again. Our postcard says "I am a school learner at Groutville High School at KwaDukuza. I would like to know more about this item for a school project, and can you help? Thank you: Sizwe Thusi. OK, firstly *ixhama* (*waist belt*) has about three names, namely; *isibhaba*, *ixhama*, *isifociya*. What is it made of? It is made of grass and beads and covered with fabric. What is its use? Its use is for women to use to slim their tummies straight after giving birth. Who is it for? It is for women to use after birth or as part of their traditional attire. OK, why is it important? It can be used anywhere, for both proverbs and psalms, *ixhama*...like this proverb that says "*uyadela umuvo uwazibopha ngexhama wabonakala* [lucky is the one who tied themselves with *ixhama* and was seen]. What does it mean? OK, the proverb says "*uyadela umuvo uwazibopha ngexhama wabonakala*." It means "lucky is the person who does something and succeeds in it".
- LG: OK now last group. Don't worry about that. Do you want help? OK this one is just coming from a school learner from Mumbai High School in India who would like to know more about this item for a school project. He says he'd like some help and there's an email address, cell phone number and postal address.
- ZX: Here we got a postcard from India. They would like information about this picture here, this picture here is *Imbiza*. *Imbiza* is made of clay, and once molded it is then heated so that it becomes hard and when it is heated you take it and put *idokwe* or *umncindo* [porridge] that is hot so that it hardens and seals cracks from inside, so that it doesn't leak when you pour you beer. When the porridge is cooled you start brewing you beer and once it has brewed to beer that means your *imbiza* works well.
- BN: Can I add something about *imbiza*? *Izimbizas* were actually used to cook as well. Yes, you see the people from the North at the museum. The people who came from the North use them to cook the food because there are no other things for

pots. They use it to cook and to fetch water. So we could add that to the importance of *imbiza*.

LG: I just have a couple of questions for the whole group. If you were wanting to get information, what is the best way for you? Do many of you have email addresses?

SpN: No.

LG: Who has email addresses?

(Just three people raise their hands)

LG: And cell phones?

BN: Cell phones, yes.

LG: Nearly everyone has a cell phone and for the people with cell phones, do you have smartphones?

Aud: Yes and no.

LG: How many of you have smartphones?

SpN: Some.

ND: Majority no.

LG: So if they were trying to contact you then the best thing maybe would be to phone?

SpN: Send an SMS.

LG: An SMS. OK, thank you. I'm thinking in terms on communicating with people outside.

ND: Even WhatsApp.

BN: WhatsApp, yes.

LG: Because then you can send pictures as well?

SpN: But I think it will depend on the age group. Because for our grandfathers or grandmothers, I don't think they will use a smartphone. They will just use those ordinary phones for SMSing. But for them as well, some of them can't read and can't send SMSs, so it will be better to just phone.

LG: Is that what our guests would like?

SpN: Yes, I think so.

LG: Would they agree?

ND: Yes.

LG: OK, thank you. Let's take a lunch break now. And come back at one-thirty.

[Lunch break]

Session: What's in your Bag?

(LG explains "what's in your bag" exercise; not captured on video recording)

LG: Ok, two more minutes. OK, do we have a couple that would like to start?

ND: Yes.

LG: OK

ND: Ok, hello for the third time. My partner is mam’Ntuli, things that she does not part with are roll-on, perfume, I.D, bank card and lipstick [...] I think roll-on and perfume are just in case.

SpN: Just in case what?

(Laughter)

LG: You can just list the three off and tell me the one that’s most important.

ND: Lipstick, perfume, roll-on, card, bank card, perfume and roll-on just in case I’m not coming back.

(Laughter)

BN: My partner is Nontokozo Dlamini. She say the one thing she cannot leave home without is, wipes, hand lotion, eh cell phone and I.D. cause it’s everything. Cosmetics, it means ‘just in case’

(Applause)

LG: Do you have that with you? Can I take a photo of you with your items?

(Photos taken)

IM: No this question about what is in my pocket. If I have money, I never leave without it. And in my garden day after day I’m on my feet planting my cabbages, onions, sweet potatoes, potatoes, beans [...] they are there now and that is what worries me. Money and ID. And bank cards.

(Applause)

LG: *Ngiyabonga kakhulu.* Can I please take a photo of it, sir?

ZY: Laura, do they need the money and that.

LG: They can just hold one up.

ZY: Baba, your ID and money, she wants to take a photo of them with you holding them, you said that’s money and your ID. Yes, so she wants to take a photo of them

DM: We are being asked to describe ourselves?

ZY: bab’Dumisa she wants to know what you do not part with, what do you have with you now?

DM: Ok, good day.

ZY: If there was a fire, what would you take?

DM: The one thing I don’t part with is money, to afford my children a living, and my garden.

ZY: What is with you?

DM: Oh, OK, what's in my wallet is money and I.D

ZY: And the third one? Money and what baba?

DM: And I.D, my pass.

ZY: He also spoke about the garden, that he likes the garden.

LG: I'll take photos in the break, I can do that.

ZY: She says she will take the photos during the break, don't feel bad about it.

LG: And then I'll make sure everybody has a copy.

ZY: And she'll give everybody a copy.

Aud: Thank you.

SV: Hi, there are only two things are do not part with: cell phone and knobkerrie.

LG: Thank you

LK: My friend Sphelele says what she doesn't leave without is a ring. Here it is. That she got from her mother when her health started deteriorating, and whenever she feels sad or misses her mother she looks at the ring. And a phone that was her mother's. She takes the phone and looks at it. Those are the things she doesn't part with.

ZY: Can you count? It's a phone, it's a ring that was left by her late mom and also the cell phone that was left by her late mom, that makes her miss her whenever she is in trouble or she has challenges.

SpN: Ok, eh Khozo, what she doesn't part with is her cell phone, as she has it with her, what's also in her bag if she is carrying it, is her notebook, card from medical aid and I.D, just in case she has a seizure. People have contact numbers of people to call on her cell phone if she is not well because she stays alone.

LG: Thank you

ZaM: She says she doesn't part with her phones, rouge and hand lotion

ZX: She doesn't part with her phone and a pen.

NM: What I don't part with is, I'll present myself, what I mostly carry with me if I don't have a bag with me is a piece of paper and a pen, so that if I see something that I like I can write about it and I can write a poem about it when I come back. If I have my bag I carry a book that has my poetry, so I can write what stood out to me. I never part with it.

ZY: The reason she carries the paper and pen is that if she sees anything she likes, she can write the poetry.

LG: Fantastic.

ZiM: Ok, Snothi here, my partner, says she never parts with her I.D. book, her documents; CVs etc. you name it, she is always applying for work, so she never parts with those things.

ZY: It's her ID and qualifications, her certificates, and her phone. She says it's very important to her.

SD: Hello, Zinhle says she always has her phone, her sunglasses and driver's license.

ZY: Phone and driver's license.

ND: And sunglasses.

ZK: Winile says she doesn't part with her I.D, so that just in case she runs into a problem she can be easily identified, lipstick, her cell phone also to be contacted easily and hand lotion.

LG: Hand lotion, OK.

WN: Hi, Zenzile Khoza says she doesn't part with her I.D., extra money, cell phone so that people can get hold of her about work.

PP: My partner is Nontobeko, she says she doesn't part with her I.D. and cell phone

NG: Hi, Mbali my partner says she doesn't part with her I.D and cell phone.

LG: Cell phone? OK, thank you.

ZaM: My cell phone is always in my bag and this that was given to me by my friend since grade 8.

BN: Ooooo, a teddy bear.

LG: And her I.D.

PP: Hello, here's my partner too, she never parts with her notebook, a pen, her cell phone and her wallet

PP: Hello, my partner says she doesn't part with her cell phone and book for her work stuff.

ZY: And wallet with money.

LG: And Zameka?

ZY: I don't have now.

BN: What you have.

LG: Three things. It could be something you are wearing.

ZY: No.

LG: OK.

ZY: It's my I.D, my notebook and my cell phone.

LG: I.D., notebook and cell phone. OK.

BN: And snuffbox.

(Laughter)

ZY: No man, it's not in my bag and we're talking about what's always in our bags.

SpN: And a box of tissues.

ZY: I'll smack you.

LG: It's hard to go last Zameka.

ZY: But in my bag it's my I.D, my wallet and notebook. But with me, no it's my cigarettes.

LG: That can be off the record. Thank you very much, we are going to take photos in a moment, if that's alright. The reason why I wanted to go through this was that these are items that you have with you every day. And the items we looked at much earlier, which are now in the Museum, those are the items that at the time of collecting they believed everyone who was Zulu was having those items. So I sort of wanted to look at what you have now, cell phones, hand lotions, just in terms of how things change and how things move on. And if someone was to try and say, what do you want to put now that people carry now, what's their material culture, then all of these things, none of which are in the museum collection, are the material culture that's being used now. Is everyone OK with me taking a photo, just one with you with just one of your items, more if you like?

ZY: uLaura says the reason why she wanted to know what things we carry with us all the time is that the people who were collecting things long ago, things that are being collected at the museums are no longer like the things we find important now, at that time when people were collecting items they were other important things. But now we are talking about rouge, about wallets, about money, cell phones, perfume, things that show that as time goes things have changed, and cell phone, cell phones were not there before but now that's where you can get hold of me.

LG: And then I just want to take photos and then I will make sure that everyone gets a copy.

ZY: She says she will take pictures and everyone here must await their pictures, she will print them, so you will come get them when they are available.

LG: Or a display. I see you [Busi and Nontokozi] have your own exhibition. Can I take a photo of you with it?

ND: Yes.

ZY: Where are the rouges? Do you have your rouge on? Just wait they like rouge. (laughter) [...]

(LG takes photos of each person with their items)

LG: Ok, we going to the small group activity and then we'll have some tea. What I just want you to do is to get together in your groups that you had before or just in small groups because we've lost some people, hey. I think we'll do one group here and two groups here. And I just want you to think back on the items that we looked at previously and then the items we just looked at now that you've allowed me to

photograph. And to think about how you would describe yourself and your community in terms of your culture and your heritage. So it might be that you think of your community as being very strong, Zulu, maybe Msinga, something else. How would you describe yourself and your community to an outside person like myself? Is that OK? Just for five, ten minutes. Five minutes even.

SpN: Ok, she would like us to get into our groups again and think back on the items we looked at before and the ones we have that she just photographed now. And describe ourselves and our community; what kind of people we are culturally.

BN: Culturally.

SpN: Yes, maybe we are still holding very closing to our old ways or maybe we are now different, how would you describe yourself and your community, so we will get in a group and discuss that for just ten minutes.

[Breakaway group discussions]

LG: Busi, would your group like to start? Do you need another couple of minutes?

SpN: I think we're ready.

LG: OK. Sphelele, your group can start.

SpN: Hi again. OK, we were asked to come together as a group and talk about ourselves or rather our community or our culture, to a new audience if there's any. What we said is that we almost lost our way as a community, as black people, how we're meant to live, where we come from and all of that. But now it seems to be coming back, that as Zulu people or maybe Xhosa people, etc. Everyone wants to go back to their culture, if I could say for instance, long ago we use to slaughter, speak to our ancestors, do *uMemulo* ceremony [young girl coming of age ceremony] and all of that. But after some time that changed, we stopped doing these things and we began worshipping God a lot, getting into the Christian faith. But now a lot of people want to know their roots, even if we are educated, even young women are seeing that a women doesn't live in a particular manner because we were losing our way as black people, how we are meant to live as black people. Ubuntu is coming back to us a black people, we were starting a manner of life where a neighbor also lives for themselves and doesn't share with their neighbour, but now we have a culture of eating together, sharing with each other if the one does not have, if there's an event we come together and eat together and be merry. Also we no longer do ceremonies like we did before, where we knew that this stage is followed but this stage or that, we are losing it, but we are slowly going back, we see during things like Heritage Day everyone wants to dress in their cultural attire and show their roots, which means we are going back to our roots.

(Applause)

LG: Do you want me to put that up here?

NM: In our group we decided to talk about how [...] oh. Our way of life is now different, before we used to wear animal skins, girls would wear *izigege*, the way of life is now different, and it's not like before like keeping our traditions, we do keep our traditions but some people still need more work at this. Respect used to

be a priority before but nowadays it's still lacking, it still has not been well instilled in us Zulu people, I'll speak of us Zulu people. Another thing, psalms, we are losing them. We used to have psalms when we were singing, we do not know them well enough, even if we still have them, they sound foreign even when we hear them, like it's not part of you, it has not touched us deep enough. Also see during ceremonies, like when *Bayethe (King)* comes in, we would usually have a praise singer, singing praises of *Bayethe*, telling of him, be it good things or bad things, things that tell of him. People like Shaka, they had people praise them of what they had done. We the youth do not regard a lot of things nowadays, but they are our origin and when older people tell us things we take things that are not ours. For instance, me, if someone heard me, like I said I'm a poet, but maybe if you heard me recite poems, you might look at me like I'm a bit crazy. But no, it's because my mind is sound and I want at the end of it all to know my Zulu history. For instance, if we want to...we do not know how to sing a psalm, we are not taught how to but you can hear when they sing that oh this is how... I usually make up my own songs, even if it's not up to scratch, they will help me if I'm not doing it right. Like this psalm that goes along with a short poem telling of who Zulu is, like "yeeeeboooo kuyoze kulunge nakithi/yes, one day things will look up for us too"

Our inheritance from our home Zululand, let us celebrate and rejoice in what is ours from Zululand, celebrate in dance and I too will celebrate and pass it on, we are a blessed nation in that we have a beautiful history, let us be proud of our rich language in idioms, proverbs and figures of speech. Our inheritance from our home Zululand. Our forefathers left us gold, let us hold on to it so that even the coming generation will find it and be glad in it, our inheritance from our home Zululand. You hold on well onto something that is a treasure, so that it can help you tomorrow, let it be tight as fist and not sip through your fingers like water. We started as a small nation and grew until we defeated other nations, our inheritance from our home Zululand. We hear of your wisdom and greatness, you held it well and today we are proud of our history as the Zulu people, Our inheritance from our home Zululand. Yes, it is still dark for some of us, deep in the hole, I say to those who have made it, may they extend a hand to those still in the hole, our inheritance from our home Zululand. It's getting better, the fog is starting to clear, let us hold it Zulu and not rejoice in dancing in other people's shoes when we have our own from Zululand, our inheritance from our home Zululand. If you want to know yourself a bit better, stretch your feet and visit the royal palace of King Chetshwayo, oNdingi, a place in the mountains of Nondwengu, and there you will get to know, you will leave boasting, born again, knowing who Zulu is, our inheritance from our home Zululand. We are rich in many things, I could spend days and weeks telling of our riches, of us the Zulu nation, our inheritance from our home Zululand.

"yeeeeboooo kuyoze kulunge nakithi/yes, one day things will look up for us too"
Our inheritance from our home Zululand. Xola Mpungose

I'm trying to say that we do not pay regard to such things, but they are our history.

(Applause)

LG: That's a tough act to follow.

BN: Greetings again. OK, in our group we discussed our communities and our culture, how this has panned out in our communities. We looked at the way in which we dress, this is the first thing we don't follow our culture in. We used to wear *amabheshu*, things made from animal skins, there were no clothes or anything but we used animal skins such as for cattle and so on. But now we were clothes, and women even wear pants, which tell us that we no longer uphold our culture. And again, if we look at the way of dressing...oh no I've said that already. And then our IDs, or else dompass, that is what we as Zulu people, actually black people as a whole used to be forced to carry these, from the village to the city you were forced to carry it. But today you have a choice in carrying your ID, no one can say you entered Jo'burg without an ID. And then we looked at how we as black people have lost a lot of our culture, because of education, education has had us lose our culture or look down on it. When we see our educated kids, firstly when they see their parents wearing *isidwaba*, they don't want you to be there because you will come wearing your traditional attire, and then religion, religion can have a person leave their culture behind. You hear people saying they are saved, how can you be saved if the blood of your forefathers is still running through your veins, it can't be, you still have to burn incense.

Session: Your Museum

LG: Thank you. OK, so we just have one small exercise before we finish, so let's just do that while we're thinking on this train. In terms of what you've just said about how you think about your culture now and not wanting to lose it, if you here were putting up an exhibition tomorrow about your community, yourselves, your culture, that you think would communicate that. You can just shout them out. You mentioned religion, is there something you would put in?

BN: Yes, bible. What else?

LG: Any of the other items on the list, like cell phones?

BN: Cell phones.

PP: I.D.

BN: Cell phones.

LG: Maybe the poem.

Aud: Yes. Wow.

LG: Do you have a title for it?

NM: No problem.

LG: Just the poem, OK. Anything from, ja, Richard.

PP: Zulu History.

LG: Zulu history. And would you have that written?

PP: Ja.

LG: So the history of the kings?

PP: Kings, ja.

LG: Would you have any of those older items? *Ukhamba, isilulu,*

BN: *Ibheshu*

PP: *Isidwaba, inhloko, isicholo*

PP: *Itunga*

LG: Oh, milk pail, OK. How do I spell that?

PP: Clay pots.

LG: Anything else, from hand lotions?

BN: Oooo. Perfume, lipstick.

LG: All those cosmetics from earlier on? It's interesting to me especially since, oh OK.

SpN: OK, I'd include, 'cause in the rural areas we have a couch reserved for our fathers *isgqiki* [stool] even if it's not necessarily *isgqiki* but we have a chair reserved for the man of the house, his couch.

BN: At my home, the sofa for my husband.

PP: Utensils, just like a spoon but it's a special spoon for the father

LG: We also have this in my house, I remember my grandfather had this special spoon that if anybody touched it...

SpN: It's kind of a sign of respect.

LG: Is there anything that you would put in that would be particularly women's items, other than the cosmetics?

PP: This red clay that's just used by women, just like Makhosi, to protect from the sun.

LG: It's interesting. Thank you very much, it's interesting because the exhibition that they have down at Iziko is this quite small exhibition and they just have these few things, and I think it's so hard to try and represent anybody's group or culture just in a, you know, static sort of time. And that one looks as if it's that everybody's culture is this just this timeless traditional thing, so it's interesting to get your ideas and also to see how hard it is to try and do that, to try and exhibit something. OK, that is my final activity; you have worked so hard. I'm very grateful. Thank you so much. I want to give you some tea and biscuit before you go off, so I'll bring some tea, the urn is still on...so yes, thank you very much, *ngiyabonga kakhulu, hambani kahle.*

Aud: *Salani kahle.*

END

Appendix 2.5. FHYA Eshowe Workshop Transcript
Five Hundred Year Archive Public Meeting/ Consultation
Vukani Museum, Eshowe
29th June 2017

Facilitators: Jo-Anne Duggan (JD)
Grant McNulty (GM)
Katie Garrun (KG)
Laura Kate Gibson (LG)

Participants: Zama Mbatha (ZM)
Thandi Nxumalo (TN)
Nini Xulu (NX)
Sabelo Nkabinde (SN)
Ayanda Ntuli (AN)
Cebisile Mbatha (CM)

Observers: Johannes

START

LG: OK everyone, welcome back again. It's really great to see you all, and unexpected as well. I thought when we said goodbye last time, as Nini said, it was the end of the road. So three weeks later, here we are.

GM: The road goes on.

LG: Shall we just start by going round and reminding of names because we've got some new people as well. So as you know, I'm Laura, or Nomagugu.

GM: Nomagogo! OK.

NX: Nomagugu.

GM: Oh, Nomagugu.

LG: Not gogo. Gogo is like an old lady.

GM: So you're a jewel! My name is Grant.

NX: Igama lama nguNini.

SN: Igama lama Sabelo.

ZM: NguZama

CM: Cebisile

GM: Cebisile

AN: Ayanda Thabani Ntuli. Either ways, Ayanda or Thabani.

TN: Thandi.

JD: Jo-Anne Duggan

KG: Katie

J?: No I'm just standing here listening.

LG: OK, well you're welcome to come and join us if you want to. So Katie, Jo-Anne and Grant are all here from the Five Hundred Year Archive Project which is a research initiative of the Archive and Public Culture Research Initiative at the University of Cape Town. So I was talking with them about the workshop and the sessions that we had run previously and how we were looking at some items that were in the Iziko Museum collection that were classified as Zulu. And they're working on a really interesting project which pulls together items from many different institutions both in South Africa and overseas and some of them are similar to the ones we looked at and other ones. And they pull them all into, it's a work in progress.

GM: Yup.

LG: They're trying to pull them altogether into one digital system so that you can access those items and information easily. So what we wanted to do this morning is, knowing that you're already interested in this topic, is to give you a demonstration of this Five Hundred Year online archive and Grant's going to talk a little bit about it and we'll have a question and answer session. And then what we'd be really interested in is giving you a chance to interact with the system yourselves, to go through and see some of the items. There's also an opportunity to comment on those. I know that a lot of the information we shared last time was not on those museum records and this system allows you to enter that sort of information in. And then Nini was talking about South African items that are overseas and how would you get to see them, as a first sort of step to start writing your letters to get them back to South Africa once you know what's there. We'd really like to start looking at this system in light of the questions you raised in the last session as well in terms of your observations how the museum didn't say who made the items, who uses the items, um, where they were made, these sorts of things, the observations we made there. Um, given the time, I'm not sure if we'll take a break but we'll definitely have time to, for everyone to connect to the system through your cell phone or tablet. I've got a tablet and laptop as well, to do that. OK, shall we begin? We're just going to have a sort of conversation to give you a bit more idea of the background. So first of all, I think the title is quite intriguing, The Five Hundred Year Archive.

GM: I just wanted to say firstly that I think it's great for us to be here from Cape Town. Thank you for having us. And I just wanted to say that, um, we're trying to build a system and we're not yet at the end of the road, we are getting there but it's a work in progress so, um, we don't want to come here and say look at this great thing we've done, you know. We're trying to build something and we value the input of people like you, practitioners in museums, and um, so I think we would prefer just to have a discussion so feel free to say this works, this doesn't work, why did this do that, I would like to see this there, um, and just tell us what you think. We can hopefully do something fun and worthwhile.

LG: So Grant can you tell us about the title? It's a very grand title.

GM: It is a grand title. The Five Hundred Year Archive Project comes from another project that the project leader, Professor Carolyn Hamilton, did when she was at Wits University and that dealt with looking at the remote past. So our materials, we've taken that name, um, the majority of the materials that we're working with, we are working with various institutions both in South Africa and overseas, um, the majority of the materials come from about the mid eighteenth

century, so 1750s, to the early twentieth century. So we're looking at the past before European colonialism, so pre-colonial.

ZM: Five Hundred Years?

GM: Not five hundred years but, um, those materials can tell us about the preceding period. Some of them archaeological to the five hundred year mark.

LG: And what kind of items are included in the Five Hundred Year Archive?

GM: Many items. (Laughter.) We have, , so we're dealing with digital materials, with digitised materials, as I'm sure you know with your digitisation centre.

ZM: Yup.

GM: Um, we are looking to make a project that is multi media. Texts, digital texts that you can search. Um, we have, , digital audio, and you might say, oh what audios can you have from the pre-colonial past? But we have recordings from the Austrian Academy of Science from 1908 that were made in Zulu and they were done with wax cylinders, um, thankfully they made a copy, a steel copy 'cause the wax cylinders burnt or got bombed in World War Two but they have the actual recordings that were digitised. So we have images, we have audio, we have text that goes on.

LG: So with the recordings is it, um, Zulu speaking people who are

GM: Yup, being recorded by a guy, a missionary called, if I'm not incorrect, Father Franz Meier.

LG: OK, so it could be people's descendants that are speaking.

GM: Yup, the recordings are scratchy but, um

NX: Like the old bioscope thing.

GM: Yup. Where you turn it. But this thing printed on to wax. A bad way of recording but maybe the best way at that time.

JD: It was the only way of recording at that time.

GM: Yes. You didn't have your phones or whatsapp audio or voice notes or things like that.

LG: And so, um, in the last group everything we looked at came from the Iziko Museums in South Africa, in Cape Town, in their collection. In the Five Hundred Year Archive what's great is that you have items from many different places. Can you tell us a few of those places?

GM: Sure. I don't know if I can remember all of them but I should, I've been there long enough. Um, we, our project, we, as I said we're trying to build a model so we are looking, the idea is to have maximum complexity within a limited scope. So we want to work across institutions, we want to work across geographic boundaries, we want to work across disciplines. So you have museums. Museums deal with materials in one way, maybe put them on display. Archaeologists do something different, they say, oh you know, we're going to put all of this in boxes and deal with it scientifically. Art museums do something different as well. So all of these, they might be dealing with similar materials that come from similar places at a similar time but they deal with them differently. So our project wants to work across that. But in order to get the

maximum complexity. We're working with the Johannesburg Art Gallery, we're working with the Killie Campbell Library in Durban, we're working with the KwaZulu Museum in Pietermaritzburg. So we've got museums

ZM: Sort of combining these things actually, somehow.

GM: Yes. If we can work across them. So we have things from, say, the ethnographic collection which is cultural items, and we also have archaeological collections and we have books. Then we have things that are thought of as art pieces, things from the traditional collection in the Johannesburg Art Gallery. Then we have audio recordings. So the idea is that, that we can work across, um, all of these geographic boundaries, these places all over the place. We can work across the disciplinary boundaries so we have libraries, we have museums, we have archives, we have art galleries, we have, um, we have archaeological stuff and we have ethnographic stuff. And some of the institutions we are working with, as I said, Johannesburg Art Gallery, Killie Campbell Library, KwaZulu Natal Museum, the Austrian Academy of Sciences, which is, um, I'm going to get this wrong, it's in Vienna, is that in Austria?

LG: Yes.

GM: Yup, OK, there we go. Don't quote me on it.

KG: Cambridge Museum.

GM: Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in Cambridge, in England. The Cambridge University Library, also in Cambridge in England. Have I missed any?

JD: UKZN. University of KwaZulu Natal.

KG: I think that's five.

LG: So really a wide spread.

GM: Yup.

LG: So across Europe, across South Africa.

KG: Swaziland Oral History.

GM: Thank you.

KG: Swaziland Oral History.

GM: Yup. At Wits University they have a project that was done in the 1970s and 80s called the Swaziland oral history project, um, so there's lots of materials from there. And so for example I'll show you in a bit how if you search for something like Dlamini, it pulls in results from Swaziland Oral History project and also pulls in results from the James Stuart Archive. Do you know James Stuart?

J?: Not personally but we know of his work.

GM: So he was a, ja, I don't think you'd know him because he's been dead

(Laughter)

KG: Not personally

- GM: Ja, I think Katie knows him intimately because she's had to process all of that stuff but, but he was a colonial official who was born here and he grew up speaking Zulu. He lived in different places in what is now KwaZulu-Natal. So Zululand and the then colony of Natal and his big idea was to record clan histories. So they recorded in English, they recorded in Zulu. And the Killie Campbell Library has the James Stuart papers which are this mass of papers. He writes in Zulu, he writes in English, he writes footnotes in the side, blah, blah, blah. The James Stuart Archive are the published archives which, , Professor John Wright worked on and before that a Professor Colin (??). They kind of annotated them and made them alphabetical so you have, like, Zuma and Zulu in the end ones and, like, AmaCele at the beginning. So it has all of, as much information about the clan histories and it's a really rich resource.
- LG: So, Grant, that's something else the Five Hundred Year Archive focuses on, is that these materials across boundaries, across disciplines, use this classification Zulu.
- GM: Yup.
- LG: Which is used so broadly, um, and often obscures where items are from originally, um, and that's generally across all these places. And how does the Five Hundred Year Archive try to break that down?
- GM: So I mean as, I'm not sure of your experiences working in a museum but the materials we've dealt with, you get something like a pot, a beer skimmer, or a basket, or a hairpin, and it has Zulu on it.
- LG: Like those cards we looked at and just in the corner was written Zulu.
- GM: Or Zulu question mark. Maybe it's Zulu, we don't know. Or it says Zulu 1925. Something like that. It has no information, or hardly any information about where it comes from and how it was created etc etc and so our project focuses on a principle of provenance and provenance wants to know where something was created, under what conditions, who created it for which purpose, and then what happens to it. So we try and create a history behind particular items because otherwise everything is generically categorised as Zulu. A lot of the materials we have been looking at, if you look at Zulu power in the north of KwaZulu-Natal, a lot of them were in, in the South. And maybe, um, and, , back in the day those people were called, like, amaLala. But they weren't, weren't part of, of central Zulu power so to call something like that Zulu is probably incorrect. So we're trying to find out as much information as we can about the items in a particular collections.
- LG: Do you want to do the demonstration of Dlamini now or do that in a bit?
- GM: No, I mean I think...
- LG: To demonstrate
- GM: Do you want to get some surnames?
- LG: Sure, shall we try.
- GM: OK, so I already know three. That this Ayanda Thabani Ntuli. And I know that this is Sabelo Nkabinde. And this is Nini, , wait what's your surname?
- NX: Xulu.

GM: Xulu, OK, OK.

ZM: Mbatha.

GM: Mbatha, OK. So this, this could show you, um, sorry, the internet, you know how these things are, we just have to wait for it to wake up.

LG: Ayanda, did you have a question?

AN: Yes.

GM: Yes, sorry, please.

AN: Sorry to interrupt.

GM: No, no, no. I think we should.

AN: I understand your introduction, how you are presenting this system but what I would like an answer is, where do we come in?

LG: You'll see.

AN: Where are we, how are we going to contribute? Because I am just asking myself, where are we fitting in?

J?: What does everybody want from us?

(Laughter.)

GM: Nothing yet.

J?: Nothing yet, that scares me.

GM: We just want to chat to you.

JD: No, I think there are a couple of very specific answers. Firstly this system has only ever been shown to people who are working with it, i.e. academics in the university and some of the partner institutions. Nobody has seen it in the format it is in at the moment. So you are the very first people we are showing it to. Because it's a system that's designed to be used by all sorts of different people. It's designed to be used by people at Iziko and it's designed to be used by people living in remote communities who might want to put information in. Unlike other systems, it doesn't just give you information, you know you enter something into your computer and you get information back from them. What the system does is asks you to put information back into it. So we say we've got a body of knowledge that can grow as different people input into it. You can input in different ways. If you look at a website, you can put a comment in. Now this is different, you can put in a comment, you can also put in a document, you can put in a photograph. You can put in a sound recording if you want to. So it's a way of building a community of knowledge around a particular object, or time period, or particular geographic region and the material culture. And so what we're going to do today, what Grant's exercise is to find surnames so that you can see that if you're doing your own research about clan histories, for example, you can find references to that surname in all these archival documents which is something you don't generally get to see in one particular place. And then we're going to look at some particular examples of objects that you looked at previously with Laura and we're going to say, OK you found this one at Iziko but look, there are very similar ones in Cambridge University and when Iziko

says made by this person, or maybe it just says Zulu, this one in Cambridge has another long story. I'm not going to tell the long story because I know Grant is.

AN: Aaahhh, OK.

JD: And then you're going to say, but hey both of these are wrong because where I come from, we call it this and it's used for that. Or I remember my grandmother used to make one or, isn't that interesting because I know in this place they're making and selling them in the craft market. So it's a way for you to talk, to speak to the objects so that when someone else comes in in another year's time and searches for something, they will find information from that museum, plus the information that you put in because they'll be able to get a much bigger picture of that thing. And you'll be able to, in a way, start correcting a lot of the things that the museums have done wrong. Because we know that often they would take something away from this country and they would call it Zulu even if it came from the Eastern Cape or anywhere, if they collected it, by a colonial person, they often just called it Zulu. So one can start unpicking the colonial problems.

LG: And you are quite interested aren't you, Jo-Anne, in those personal stories.

JD: Yes, yes.

LG: So in the last workshop, you know, especially when we were talking about the *ukhamba* and you were saying how you had made that before, and your experiences of making it, then if you wanted to contribute that. Just as, well in terms of how we were talking last time about a lot of those histories being lost when people's families move to different places, to the UK, and to wherever, this is another resource for people to record their histories as well. It's supposed to be a two way thing.

AN: You are welcome, thank you.

GM: Yup, so, I, , look, there's a lot of Dlamini's so it's an easy. We don't have all of our materials up, it's just to showcase some of the materials so here. I don't know if this is the best. Can everyone see? I can move that to there, it's just the Internet, I have to be

LG: So it's found?

GM: It's on my phone. Or do you have WiFi here?

J?: WiFi's at the restaurant.

GM: Will I pick it up?

J?: I don't know how far you will be able. Well I don't know how strong the signal will be.

GM: It says it's here. Would you mind if I try?

J?: Ja, Adams Outpost. You've got that one?

GM: No, I just have Vukani.

J?: Well Vukani's got their own.

GM: OK.

ZM: Ask Vivienne, she's there. Would you? Please.

(J? exits, presumably to find Vivienne, but does not return.)

GM: OK, so we'll try with my phone for the time being but sometimes it's patchy. So.

JD: What's the password?

GM: I don't know.

JD: No, for your one.

GM: Oh, f-h-y-a-f-h-y-a. Twice because you need a

JD: Just to see it's working.

GM: It's called FHYA.

JD: No, no, it's picking it up.

LG: So if we do a search for Dlamini, it brings up 23 items.

GM: Yup.

LG: That relate to that material.

GM: Yup, so it, it picks up. (Phone rings.) Sorry this timing is bad. Um, it picks up a, it picks up Joseph Dlamini who was a person who was part of that project, the Swaziland Oral History Project. It also picks up different resources. In the beginning it may not be clear to you but you can see stuff from, um, the Dlamini, from the Swaziland Oral History project and then you can also see references from the James Stuart Archive which is that book that I told you about. So you can see that there's like, something like, correct me, how many? Two thousand pages in total or maybe more.

KG: In all of them?

GM: Yup.

KG: All the volumes. Ja, maybe.

GM: A few thousand. I don't know.

KG: More than, maybe.

GM: So you can get all of the references where the word Dlamini appears. So, um, here, for example, we have a notebook from the, it's from the Wits historical papers but it's to do with the Swaziland Oral History Project and it was recorded in May 1970. And if you click it, it's going to take a little while to load up, especially on this.

ZM: Because...the Dlaminis are from Swaziland.

GM: Yup. So that's one example. And another example is in this testimony of a guy called John Gama. He talks about Dlamini and so you can go through and see all of the instances where he is talking, he references, Dlamini. So he talks about his, well these are all the clan histories and you can see the various instances where Dlamini occurs. They are highlighted. And if you click through to the pdf it's still highlighted where it's picking up the search. So you can see why you are being shown this resource.

LG: And Grant you were also saying with the search function, that if Dlamini made a comment and contributed, that would also show up.

GM: Yup, so for example I did some searches, here, sorry, this is the resource. This is what was loading up. You can see the original transcripts of the interviews and you can see the original Swati, so you can see the and go and read what was actually said forty seven years ago and you can comment on it and say what this guy says is actually not true, or I don't agree with this or, you know, I think we do something different. But I searched for Mr Nkabinde's surname. And I couldn't find anything! So the Ntuli comes up. Dlamini comes up. Xulu comes up. I'll show you the example. In the current number of materials that we have, um, Nkabinde did not come up.

LG: So Sabelo you'll have to input on that.

JD: Try with just a section of the name.

GM: OK, I will. So, sorry, then I added a comment. And you can see here if I put Nkabinde, one example comes up. And this is a comment that you might write on this website that says, *Uphi umlando wakwa Nkabinde?* Where is the history of the Nkabindes? So you are looking at something and you search your name, like people google themselves. You say Nkabinde is not there, *Uphi umlando wakwa Nkabinde?* Where is the Nkabinde. So this is a way you can interact and you can see that by searching it picks up and highlights Sabelo Nkabinde's comment on a particular day at a particular time.

ZM: Oh, OK.

TN: And Nxumalo.

GM: Nxumalo. OK fine, one sec. Nkabinde. Let's go Nxumalo.

LG: Thandi, you're awake now.

GM: Twenty-five matches of Nxumalo.

LG: Can I show her?

GM: Yup, so, I'll just load them up.

ZM: Come this side.

LG: I'll bring it over to you.

GM: [...] These are all interviews with people where, from James Stuart, where they

LG: Can I show?

GM: Yeah, yeah, you can click one if you want.

LG: And then what we'll do in the session is get you registered so you can [...] So these are all mentions.

GM: So these documents, sorry, have Nxumalo in them. So they'll take you to a reference where someone said maybe a hundred, or a hundred and twenty, or hundred twenty five years ago, they are talking about the Nxumalos. And they are saying, oh, the Nxumalos did this, or this is someone I know who is called Nxumalo, you should ask him for information, blah, blah, blah. So, hang on a sec, here there are only two references. So it says [quotes from FHYA] Then

there's another one where it says [quotes from FHYA] So that is, I don't know, quite a detailed, quite a niche thing. But if you look through these materials you can find where there are references to Nxumalo throughout this book. Where, sorry, throughout the six books that James Stuart wrote, or that were published based on James Stuart's materials, and then also, if there were a reference, for example, in, um, Johannesburg Art Gallery, about something to do with the Nxumalos, that would come up as well. So if there was something, there probably wouldn't be, because many things are called, as the project talks about, many things are just categorised as Zulu, but if there was a reference to Nxumalo in the Cambridge University Library, half way across the world, you would be able to find it there.

ZM: OK.

NX: Like for instance the Nxumalo with us is also Ndwandwe (?)

GM: And it says here, just as I looked at it, was the chief of the Ndwandwe. [Quotes from FHYA.]

AN: [...] and Shaka didn't see eye-to-eye.

NX: The other thing is the Mkathwa, the Ndwandwe, the Nxumalo, as Nxumalo you can't get married to Ndwandwe because...

ZM: It's also the same with us Mbatha and Ndladla.

NX: But it's fading away. People don't even know.

LG: Maybe they will now.

(Laughter)

GM: There we go, Mbatha. M-B-A-T-H-A.

ZM: Yes.

GM: There's [quotes from FHYA]

TN: Those are praise names there.

GM: They are. I think these are, they are still working on the praises but these are people talking about the history of KwaZulu-Natal and they mention Mbatha, or they mention Nxumalo, or they mention Xulu, or Ntuli, or something like that.

AN: Because Mbatha [...]

(Inaudible group chatter)

GM: So those are just, here you go. [Quotes from FHYA].

ZM: Ah, OK.

GM: So James Stuart goes out and he interviews people he identifies as, or other people tell him, as being people who know about history in, um, the colony of Natal or in Zululand. [Quotes from FYHA.]

ZM: Namazita is actually, it's used by Zulu. But originally it was, ja, originally it was Zulu. And then the Zulus

CM: It was the Mbatha,

ZM: And then actually there was agreement because they said in Zulu that they didn't like actually what they were called. So they actually brought that *indabazita*. They used to be called *lufenulwenja*, which is not good.

GM: The dog's what?

(Laughter)

ZM: What is *lufenulwenja*?

NX: It is the penis.

ZM: Oh!

GM: The penis of the, the dog's penis. That's what the Zulus were.

(Laughter)

GM: I mean you can write this. But maybe don't put your name on it.

ZM: To us actually, Mbatha, taught us to use *ngabazantha* instead of *lufenulwenja*.

GM: It's like [...] for the Mkhizes. But see now, this is not on here. So you can come and write this. I don't think put your real name.

(Laughter)

LG: And so

GM: So I mean shall we look at, I can show you guys afterwards, there's Canyosi. There's fifteen results. So you guys can look at this and you can put in search terms, um, you can put in your surname, Ntuli comes up with thirteen matches, Xulu comes up with thirteen.

LG: And this is just a sample of the material. There's a lot more.

GM: No, no, look, ja there will be a lot more. These are just, we're just sample testing.

LG: And then Grant whilst you're on there, would you be able to show us, um, if there are any items similar to the ones we were looking at in the last workshop?

GM: Sure.

LG: Such as the beer skimmer.

GM: Yup.

LG: That we looked at. Belt. Spoons. Lots of spoons.

GM: Ummm, one sec, 'scuse me.

NX: UGrant?

GM: Yup.

NX: I think slowly, I'm a gogo.

GM: I do too and I'm not.

(Laughter)

NX: OK, you say rethinking museum collections.

- GM: Yup.
- NX: In South Africa. What are you going to, is this information going to be introduced in university education or even in lower?
- LG: So Jo-Anne's role in the project is taking the system public so
- JD: Look, we're not doing anything about introducing things into anything else. I think we need to be quite frank about that. What we're trying to do is we're trying to say there is a system that will allow for that sort of thing to happen. So that people can draw on it. So if the universities, and we know the universities are very focused on what they call decolonising at the moment, um, well they might say, well here's a place or a system where we get different kind of information. School teachers may say, well here is a system with different kinds of information that what we get in the curriculum, but our object is not to change the curriculum but to contribute to people who are doing that work. But we are focused, and the funding we got for the project, was to develop a system that does something no other system does in bringing all of these materials together.
- KG: But then when we're looking at promoting it, who are we promoting it to?
- JD: We're promoting it to museums, to educators, to tertiary institutions, to anybody who might use it and be able to benefit from it.
- NX: And what are you going to get by doing that?
- JD: We're not going to get anything except we're hoping they will use it. They will see the value of it and use it.
- GM: It's like a public resource.
- JD: We've, we've developed it, the system, and I think it's taken five years to develop, this particular system, and to get the agreements with all the partner institutions, so there are a lot of institutions who will use it because they're part of it already and, um, our project was to develop it and to make it available. And so now we know, for example, in Lesotho where they don't have any museums, they've got one very small area they're developing a national museum, they're very interested in this system because all the Lesotho cultural material is in museums across the world. Now they say they're starting to develop a national museum, they want to use this system because it's going to get them off to a very good start by making the material that's available in other places available in one central electronic format and allowing people in Lesotho to look at that and say, hey, this is what we have to say about that, or we know that there were things like this made. So for example we know in Lesotho, the biggest collection of Lesotho is in the London, in London in the British Museum. And people in Lesotho when I showed them photographs of that were astonished because they didn't know that that material existed in London. They knew that they could recognise it because they, some of them remembered things like that, or some things were still being made, but they very excited about the system that we were. Well my job is to get people excited about the system so that they start using it and to get people to understand why it's different from all the other kind of systems. So maybe just to say one thing, lots of museum have digital databases or what they call digital collections management systems and they are just about the object. So you can search for information just about the object, but you won't get all this kind of information like searching for surnames that

you've just done now. So we bringing together a lot of very complicated stuff into one, um

KG: Place, ja.

JD: Place that you can search it.

ZM: Excuse me, may I ask just a, I don't know if it's relevant, in London, what are they going to do with all this, um, items that they, from all over actually.

JD: They're going to keep them. That's what they're going to do.

ZM: Keep them.

JD: Yes.

ZM: Why don't they bring them back, because we need them?

JD: Because the, the British Museum is a very good example. They have materials, so for example the Lesotho material that I worked with that sits in the British Museum, they acquired in two different ways. Some of it was part of a big collection that was brought across in about 1863 and it was collected for what was called a world exhibition and went with what was called the Natal pavilion. So the people in Natal collected material around the country and they sent it all across to Britain for this big exhibition. And then at the end of this exhibition

ZM: They never brought it back?

JD: No, no. So at the end of the exhibition it was sold. All the material was sold after this exhibition and the British Museum then bought a whole big collection from one of the people who had bought it from there. They also got from missionaries who had been in Natal. They got material. The same thing applies to KZN. Um, they also took British Museum materials from all the places in the world that they colonised, that they went to. And the most contested thing that they have there is, is marble sculptures that come from Greece. Now those are the pride of Greece, Greek culture. They are, that is the thing that Greece wants more than anything in the world.

ZM: What are they?

JD: And the British Museum are refusing to give it back.

ZM: They don't, they don't even want to sell it?

JD: No, no, they can't, no they won't sell it. But they won't give it back. First they said to the Greek people you, we keeping it because you don't have a good enough museum to put it in. And then the Greek people built a fantastic, world-class museum. And still the British people won't give it back. We know that they're not going to give back anything at all to other countries because the minute they give one thing back, they'll have to give the Greek stuff back

KG: They'll lose all their collection.

JD: And they're going to lose everything. So we know that that institution is particularly problematic. But there are lots of other places around the world that will, that are giving things back because in museums it's become quite an ethical issue. First they have to give back the human remains. Because we know that in all, including the British Museum, there are pieces of our citizens are sitting in those museums. The British Museum, for example, has purses that were made

out of women's breasts by soldiers who seized them when they were in this country. And, you know, there's an argument to try to get those things back now, to get those things properly, properly buried and treated with respect. So there is in museums across the world a big move to returning things.

TN: And how did they return Sarah Baartman?

JD: Sarah Baartman was in French museum and so they were, so that's a whole different dispensation.

TN: OK

JD: And that was a big diplomatic, , discussion before they returned Sarah Baartman. But that was actually one of the earliest cases of returning something, a human being to South Africa.

LG: But I think it also raises another interesting point that because of the ways things have been classified as just simply the date and then Zulu, it's very hard to know where they came from and who to return them to.

KG: Absolutely.

LG: So having a system like this means you can start finding out that provenance, then being able to say, look, this should come back.

KG: Absolutely. It's a start to how to get it back.

LG: Exactly what we were talking about, Nini. Another issue is if you don't know what is there, you can't go to the British Museum, and then when you do, the labels are all obscured of provenance, then that's another way of closing down that conversation. So you have a system like this where you can start looking more into those objects and into their past.

NX: This information can also be good for traditional leadership. I mean they are the top custodians of this information. But they need to be, I don't know, I can't use motivation. I think they, their sense of owning, their traditional leadership essence, what is it. I mean, what makes me a Xulu? You know, what makes me a Xulu? We need to, to have a change of mind set to say, to be proud of who I am and have that deep sense of loving myself. That could be caused. People now, I'm just a human being on Earth, full stop. Where I come from, the history is not my business.

ZM: Because as we were talking about, like, we as a museum we are talking about this stuff and actually they have in London a museum. You know for the museum, I think for us it's actually quite interesting, I don't know how we can get an opportunity to just go and see, wow, and all the information though we know we will never actually get all that stuff.

LG: Maybe, things change.

JD: And can I just interrupt to say one of our colleagues, Nessa, who worked on collecting the information for this went to the museums because her role in the project was to go to the museums in the United Kingdom to find that material and one of the problems was how was that material labelled. So she had to look at a whole lot of material to work out what actually was applicable to here because she would find a drawer full of stuff that was all called Zulu. But because she's been a curator of traditional materials across South Africa, she

could say I know this isn't Zulu. Um, why did they call something that is quite clearly from the Eastern Cape or Limpopo, why, you know, they just called it Zulu. So the problem with going there to look for the things is how do you ask the questions so that you actually get the answers that you want. A lot of the material won't say Zulu, it might say something completely different, so you've got to sift through a lot of material in order to find what they have from various places.

ZM: I think actually the London museum has to have a way to bring out some of, actually, the information. To send out actually the pictures so that they can find out information about the objects that they are actually holding so that they can have a right interpretation or explanation.

JD: I think they think they've got the information. Because you see the thing around the Five Hundred Year Archive is it doesn't focus on the object. It's much more than the object. So if you look at the British Museum website, they have got the most fantastic website of objects from their collection. So if you were to go there and search for Zulu, you might have to spell it Z-U-L-U or Z-O-E-L-O-E for example, you would find a lot of information but information tells you, shows you a picture of the object so you can see what it looks like, it tells you how big it is, it tells you what all the different kind of materials it's made out of, so it will say, um, bag, um, string, beads, leather, it's this size, it's in good condition or it's not in good condition, and it will say we bought it from, um, what is that big medical collection with it, a whole lot of stuff in the British Museum, um, the Wellcome. It will say source, Wellcome collection. Now the Wellcome collection is a collection that was set up in the twentieth century. They collected things from other people, so they have their information. But the British Museum will just say Wellcome collection. In rare cases it will say collected in such and such a place if the British Museum

ZM: Where is the British Museum, the London museum, where is it exactly.

LG: The British Museum is in, um, Bloomsbury. Quite central London.

ZM: Oh OK, it's central.

JD: But you should look at their website. Because if you go to search their collections it really, you can see a lot of material. It's not everything, obviously, because they've got millions of objects but you can certainly find a lot of very interesting things. But with the kind of information that museums think is useful. And museums, because they are the objects, are not necessarily interested in who made it or how it was used. They, they, you know, they don't really focus on that often. So if they display the work, they would display like twenty-five beaded handbags. It didn't matter really that this one comes from here and this one comes from there, they're interested in the fact that it's a handbag and it's got beads on it.

ZM: And it's Zulu or whatever.

JD: No. One label might say Zulu, it might say Egypt, it might say South America. But there wouldn't be the sort of history that we are looking at in the FHYA. Because they're interested in the material object. And this is, say material, object, is one little piece in a much bigger puzzle that gives us a whole picture. So in order to understand this saucer in the British Museum, we actually, we not only interested in the fact that it's a saucer made out of china and it's got a stamp

on the back of it. We want to say this person, this is how it got into the museum, and this is what happened in the museum. So it's not as if it just almost arrived out of nowhere. And we are saying we're interested in that because of what it tells us. If you can understand the life story of this before it got into the museum, then you get all the information you asking now. And so that's why we're saying you've got to understand that, not just this thing hanging on the wall in the museum.

KG: It's the product of people. It's people.

ZM: So it's interest in the, the, originality of the beads coming from people.

JD: Yes, yes. So if I can give you an example on the subject of beads. Sorry, now I'm interrupting, but I did a project at Mapungubwe, Limpopo, where the gold rhino comes from. And I looked at what the museum had done with the material that they took out of the graves. Now there was a lot of beadwork found in the graves. I wanted to know what material was found with, then there were lots of human remains found in the graves. So I wanted to know, this person who we know is a man, middle aged, who died of [?] disease because they can tell that from the skeleton, and what was found with this man. So if I looked at the archaeologist notebooks, it would say beads, and it would say green beads or something. So when I went to the museum and I said now I want these, I want this man's beads back, because I want to put this man back with his beads. They had taken away the beads and they had thrown them into boxes. So they had taken these red ones, these green ones, etc, they'd just muddled them up. And they said it doesn't matter, it says he had six green beads and two blue ones, so you gave take six green and two blue. I said, but that's not the point. We want his two beads to bring them back. But to them a glass bead is a glass bead and the only thing that's different is the colour. So, you know, you want green beads, well help yourself to them out of that box and, and that's how museums tend to work with material. And so we saying what we're doing at FHYA is what were those beads, where did the beads come from, how did they get made, who made them, who brought the beads to that place, who brought the object, etc? You look at the much longer chain of evidence.

NX: Now I'm changing my mind Nomagugu. Um, I think it won't work to bring all those objects from overseas until the, the, the true honest, committed custodians that will look at that. I think even traditional leadership needs to be sensitised in it, you know, to value, to honour, and be real, real, real custodians that can see the value of these objects.

LG: But perhaps also those museum that are looking after them need to appreciate that value as well. So it's a two way exchange.

NX: But, I mean, uh, now we can see them through the Internet. But at the present moment, people sell things. Even it's like, if I die, and I was so much in love with my bag, my children can just give it away because now the, the, the value of what was valued is not yet instilled.

GM: In their minds, yeah.

NX: So we need to have like, to support this, we need to have a system where there will be a program of, um, sensitising people to, to value what they have.

LG: And do you think, Nini, that this would be some way of doing it? If you had the traditional leaders, or some other people who might be potential custodians, to,

say, see what is in the collection and that would be a starting point for instilling that pride?

NX: Mmmhmmm. Because now, I'm a Xulu, all I know is just a few praises and I don't in my sleep dream about where did I originate.

GM: You say you do, or you don't?

NX: I don't.

GM: OK.

NX: I don't. I mean you think about it like, you know, in passing. But not with interest, you know. So that is what needs to happen if this information can be valuable to whoever it belongs to. They need to run a programme of changing the mind set in terms of honouring what they have.

AN: Just to add on to what she has just said. Me personally, I have never honestly taken seriously the issue of knowing my historical background of my family until in 2015, in Durban, a friend of mine took me to his family, , to meet. He had to inform his family that I'm his friend, we're good friends. And he took me to his family to introduce me to his family so that they can know me. And then when we got there they had even prepared a dinner. I mean lunch, because they knew there was a friend coming from Eshowe. And the first time his Dad asked me a question, where are you from, who are my grandfathers, where we originated from? Something never crossed my mind. Here are you, your name, your surname, I want to know, please tell me where your forefathers came from. And I was shocked. Because I was just here because I'm a friend of his son, he's going to ask me such a question. So for him, was just asking out of interest. And I end up covering myself.

(Laughter)

AN: He just pose such a question. Where you forefathers came from? Asking in a very relaxed environment. And that came to my mind that I have to research more.

ZM: Why they were asking, because that's how they used to follow actually, in the Zulu culture, whenever they were asking *ngabani*, *ngabani*, *ngabani* going back and back and back and that's actually how they will know, actually, how you link with the other people. That's how it used to be. But now today, you are not actually doing that.

AN: No, we just go I'm Ntuli.

LG: And when you did start doing that research, how did you feel? Did you feel proud, or?

AN: I felt challenged.

LG: Challenged.

AN: Because it showed I didn't know who I was. 'Cause he was asking, he thought that it was just a common question that I should just know a common answer.

LG: Like, what's your name?

AN: Yes, like what's your name. He asked me, OK, but also your grandfather, where did he originate from.

- JD: He was wanting you to recite the whole genealogy.
- AN: Yes.
- ZM: Did you research your family tree?
- AN: Yes, I did. I did. And we come from the Ntuli family where Chief [...] is from. Ja, so I did it.
- TN: I did it on Facebook [...] my surname. And they showed me, told me that we all originated from Lesotho. I do remember because I lived in Limpopo, there with my grandmother, that's where I started school. I remember starting learning in Tsetswana, that's my original language, and then when the area was given to the Pedis, we changed and started learning in Pedi, yes. So I looked on Facebook and I found a lot of people with my surname who told me where I originated and I felt so satisfied.
- GM: You, talking about your point, Nini, you know, to instil pride or to know who you are, there's a potential for this, this kind of platform to give access to more people. Now I don't know if Ayanda Thabani Ntuli is going to get anything more but there's 37 matches for his surname so you can maybe find something else.
- AN: Even from the Zulu royal family, if you say you are a Zulu, they ask, which house? So if you don't know who your Dad is, from who, then they don't take you seriously. So you've got to know your lineage.
- ZM: [...]
- AN: [...] So I cannot just claim I am a prince 'cause I just feel it, I want to be called a prince. So OK, you said you are a prince, from which house? Who was your great-grandfather? Then to prove yourself.
- GM: But that's exactly in the [...] condition for tradition, traditional leadership and, I can't remember the full title.
- AN: Oh yes, I know.
- GM: Traditional leadership, um, royal affairs or something. The Nhlapo Commission opened up this discussion of royalty. There's the Zulu king, there's the kings of the Eastern Cape and are there any others? And people were going to this exact resource I was telling you about, to the James Stuart Archive. They were going to the Killie Campbell Library in Durban and they were using that as a resource to do research about their family histories to try to find out which clan so that they can make a claim for royal status. So, um, yes, it's true. You do need to know which side you're on and it gives you certain status, certain royal status. You can say I'm a prince because here's my oral history.
- ZM: Actually in a Zulu, OK, the Zulu surnames, *isithakazelo*, they actually, if you know *isithakazelo*, if you go back, you must follow them, they tell you everything. Where you are coming from.
- TN: Like the bible. They talk about ancestors. The son of so and so.
- NX: It's like Afrikaans people. You find somebody with six names. What's your name? Johannes, [...], [...], [...]
- AN: Our curator here, his father's the same name, same as his. Johannes.

- NX: That's how they did, the great great-grandfathers. But now, with us, we just have a name, not even a grandmother's name. You just get given a name and you don't even know what your grandmother's name is. Just the name, just the name. So that is fading away because you find that black children in universities, not in primary school or high school, now that there's this multi-racial thing, they are ashamed of being Zulu. You know. Or practising their culture in universities. They just lose it. You can't take that to the information (points at the computer with FHYA screen showing). That's too far and too *bundu* for them.
- GM: But do you not think that, like, if you said, like, if grandpa or granny says, you know, you must know your *isithakazelo*, they're like, nah, but if they google their name *isithakazelo* comes up, then they think it's cool.
- LG: If you can find all that on your cell phone.
- JD: Can I just interrupt? I think it's getting quite late and I know we've got quite a lot to cover. This is a fascinating conversation but maybe we can continue talking over lunch. Thank you.
- GM: The surnames got us distracted.
- JD: [...] get us back on the straight and narrow for a bit. But it's so fascinating the issues people are raising. It really is fascinating.
- GM: Yup, so I'm, we found some materials, , that are similar to the ones Laura showed you, I think. You should just check these. You can see for example, in this instance, that I searched for *isikheto*. And you can see it highlights the word. There. And so you, you click through, and it gives you different images from the different institutions, from the, this one, for example, is from the Johannesburg Art Gallery. And then you can click through, sorry, there's only a small image at the moment, but you would click through to a bigger image and it, it gives you the history. Trying to find out when it was collected, who was the custodian, the institutional custodian, what we have done as the Five Hundred Year Archive with it, and it, it gives you different images of it, and, , it gives you access to the materials that you otherwise wouldn't have. We can sit here and look at institutions that are in Johannesburg.
- LG: One of the beer skimmers that we looked at in the last workshop had actually been purchased from Eshowe and ended up in Cape Town. So what was very interesting as well was that the group was talking about when they had used it, that people were still selling it, that they bought it, so that's the kind of information that they could put into
- GM: Yes, so this example has one. So this is a beer skimmer which is in the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of Cambridge in, , England. And you, you can see the information about it. Who was the collector? Sir Bartell Frere. In Durban we used to have Frere Road. He was a colonial administrator I think. When did he collect it? 1877 to, or 1878. Who was the donor? Miss [?] Frere donated it to the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in 1912. And since then they have been the custodians for over a hundred years. And you can see all of the information that is on the, the accession cards and the labels and then you can also click through and you can see in detail what it looks like, so you can, this may be of interest to some people more than others. Our idea is that this platform should be open for, for many people. For example if you google something like rocks. I'm a jewellery

designer, I don't really care about all of the details, but I'm interested in how, in, before the Europeans came to South Africa, who was in Natal people who made, used brass to try to get some inspiration from the jewellery. Google, sorry not google, you look on our platform and search for brass and then you can either, just, you know, take, look at things to inform your design. That's one type of user. Another type of person might want all of the meticulous history. They want to know every little nitty gritty detail. Someone might be interested in how, colonial people, colonists in Natal wrote in the 1930s. They can look at the handwriting. Something like that. So it opens up various opportunities. And in each instance, you can find all of this information, you can see who did what, as much as we know from the records, from the accession records, and then you can comment. Something like, oh, you know, we have an example of this in present-day Eshowe. People are making these for x, y, z. And you can then upload the pictures of that if you want to. And you might want to talk through the examples and see if we have a good

LG: Yeah, we looked at one of the *isibhamba* beaded. Yup *isibhamba*. So that's another interesting point we talked about last time as well that the cards that we looked at rarely had the isiZulu name on them. so some of these ones do but

GM: No. Not often. Here again we're in the museum in Cambridge. This is the type of information they had. , two, this person's writing is bad, two beaded waistcoats for women, four rows of white and pink beads with a question mark something design in blue. This is all the information they have. They think they collected it in 1890 to 1900. And it says Zulu. There's not that much info about it. So

LG: So even collecting, so using the platform as a way to collect the correct isiZulu names would be

GM: That would be great. So then you, for example, could come in and you, what did you say the name was?

ZM: *Isibhamba*.

GM: *Isibamba*. I-S-I-B-A-M

ZM: H

GM: *Isibhamba*. And then B-A. I-S-I-B-H-A-M-B-A.

NX: And *isifociya*.

GM: *Isibhamba*, yes.

AN: [...]

NX: i-band

AN: Yes, yes, yes.

NX: [...] when a woman is, after a woman has given birth she wears that. In some places they call it *isifociya*. *Isifociya*.

LG: I remember you talking about it.

NX: And when they pay *lobola*, they say they want an *isifociya* cow. It's the eleventh cow.

GM: No that's definitely not in there. So someone, for example, could say this [...] *isibhamba*

ZM: *Isifociya*

GM: *Isifo*

ZM: *Isifociya*.

NX: Because it's supposed to contain not to be lax after birth.

GM: That's not an *isibhamba*.

ZM: Your first child, if you are pregnant, and you have with your first baby and you are forced to wear that *isifociya* tight, it must be very tight so that actually your stomach won't wobble and will be big and if you won't be able to contain it, it's very painful.

LG: Like a corset.

ZM: Even if you try with your second child, with the second child, if you didn't do it on your first child, your stomach won't go down. It won't go down. So it does help really, actually, because we are supposed to be eating a lot as well when actually after birth. So even myself, I went through that.

NX: And they watch you. You mustn't loosen it.

(Laughter, inaudible group chatter for a few seconds)

LG: And you have to keep it on until you stop breastfeeding.

ZM: I don't know for how many months. How many months?

JD: You know it's encouraged in hospitals at the moment.

LG: Really.

JD: You get a special, it's like a corset, it's a band that you wear round as soon as you've given birth. You wear that to suppress the muscles a bit and to support your stomach while it gets back to. Now apparently it's being very widely used. But now they're made out of sort of stiff elastic.

TN: Another way is liposuction.

JD: From what I've seen, it works very well.

ZM: Ja, it does. It's painful but actually later on you say

NX: [...]

ZM: You won't have a flappy tummy or, you know.

AN: You know, Laura, there's a friend of mine here who's just like, because I've got a big tummy and I know it but I'm working on it

(Laughter)

JD: Are you working on making it bigger or smaller?

(Laughter)

AN: So there were these guys from [?], Zimbabwe, who came with this belt that you know you normally put around stomach to make sure your tummy is small, they normally advertise on TV

LG: OK.

AN: They're sold at GAME and so forth. So this guy from [?], he came here and said, here guys I'm selling this belt, and all of us we commented that he needed to sell it to so and so. And the guy was angry at us. And we had to apologise. We said, no, we know the person who needs this.

(Laughter)

AN: He was too angry [...]

NX: Nomagugu. Can I go and

LG: Of course. Of course you can.

ZM: [...] *si hamba?*

LG: Will we see you for lunch?

NX: I'm fetching children from the school and coming back.

LG: So Grant, so this issue

ZM: [...] oh yes, it's fifteen minutes from here.

LG: Putting the names in isiZulu so that people who are perhaps not so competent in English would then be able to find using those names.

GM: Well, yeah, like an example I used with Nkabinde's surname, once you put it in, it becomes searchable. Then you can pick it up. It becomes part of the record. So, for example, all of this information that we've just had about how it's called *isifociya* or it's called, like, *isibhamba*, all of that could be, that enriches the record 'cause otherwise

NX: Not for pregnant, for post-delivery

GM: Yup. You can write it. So that then, all of that becomes, adds contextual information to a thing that, , otherwise doesn't have a lot of information. Like this pin for example. All of it, again the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, and the only information about it is, a wooden hair pin with beaded head. , it says Africa, Southern Africa, Republic of South Africa, Zululand.

ZM: What is that?

GM: 1905.

ZM: The picture.

GM: This is, this is the

TN: For scratching your head.

GM: A hair pin.

TN: Yes.

GM: Sorry, I'll show you the bigger picture.

TN: It has got a new name. Modern name. Yes, they call it *hlokoloza*.

(Grant walks around to show everyone laptop screen)

NX: *Hlokoloza* is poking.

TN: [...] braided hair and if you are sweating, then you make it like this, scratching. Yes.

ZM: Ja, scratching.

TN: Just doing like this.

ZN: Using the head gear. They couldn't take it out, actually, so *hlokoloza*. You have to keep that head gear for some time. You don't wash it.

LG: And then, Grant, is the whole, do you have plans to make the whole website isiZulu?

JD: Sorry, I think, are you going to talk about the hairpin story?

GM: I can talk about the hairpin story.

JD: I think that was.

KG: Because timewise we're looking a bit

GM: So what happens then, I mean part of, of the project, is talking about how these materials, get dispersed to different institutions. So, like, one goes to archaeology, to archaeological collections, one goes to an art museum, one goes into an ethnographic collection. But they come from the same place. More or less. So, so here's that pin that I showed you, here's the pin, the one we just looked at. And it, it has, , a, , it has a, it looks a particular way. It has a certain style and layout of the beads etc etc.

ZM: What Zulu name did they give it?

GM: They didn't. It just says, it, it just says, there's no Zulu name. It says material, wood, bead and grass. A wooden hairpin with a beaded head. Cultural group, Zulu. Maker, no information. So this, this is this question of provenance that I was talking about. So we want to know who created this thing and when did they create it, under which conditions. And what you can then find out, which is what one of our researchers has done, is she found out information that in fact there was a hairpin that looks very stylistically the same. It looks almost identical. So there's the one. No, where's the one I just showed you? Excuse me. Here's the one I just showed you which is in the Museum of Anthropology and Archaeology in Cambridge. And here's the other one which is in fact in the Pitt Rivers Museum which is a completely different institution. But our researcher made the connection. She said, well in fact this one was collected at a particular time and particular place. It was collected at [?]'s kraal. He was a Zondi chief. It was collected on the twenty-sixth of August 1905.

TN: There's a newer version of that one. It's made of steel. And it's got a knob at the top. And it's made of steel and it is smooth.

GM: OK.

TN: It's also made for the same purpose.

GM: OK.

TN: By the Chinese.

GM: Yeah, so we could have.

JD: Finish the story.

GM: A version of it. So a newer version. But the story is that, was it not you, Zama, who was talking about you wanted to know information about who made things at a particular time and, and why, under what conditions. So our, one of our researchers, found out that this pin

JD: But, Grant, I'm going to interrupt you. Explain how they found out. Because that's the key here. She found out by looking at the notes.

GM: Yup, in, in

JD: So the museum they take the hairpin and they put it here. And they take the notebook in which they, the person who found it wrote about it, and they put it here. And nobody pulls those two things together.

GM: Whereas this project does. So you don't just get the item, you get the item, the accession register, the label, all of the extra information. And she found out that in the notes this hairpin was found 26th August 1905 at Chief Titilako's (?) kraal and he was a Zondi chief and his wife had made it. So she then says that the guy who collected this, a guy called Henry Balfour, and the guy that collected this, was a guy called E C Haddon. And they were on the same expedition at the same time. So she says that you can make, our researcher says you can make the connection between those and say that these were made at the same time at the same place, and were collected at the same time. As part of the same expedition. But you can only do that if you have all of this additional information. Which is what, , well, 'cause otherwise you don't have all of it. You just see the item and you can't make the collection, the connection across the collection.

JD: So there are three connections that are being made. The first is the connection between the item and the notebook that are in the same place but stored I two completely different components. So what you store in the archive is not what you store in the museum collection. So firstly what the researcher did was to pull this information in the same place, together. And then when she looked at it, she said this object is like an object in that museum, but that museum don't know what we know form this piece of information that we've put. And they never going to know unless I tell them, because they not going to be able to make the connections I've made. So what our system does, is it makes those connections.

ZM: Oh, OK.

JD: So people will be able to look at their collections and say, here's something that looks so much like something and we've got all of this story that goes with that object, maybe we can connect ours into that.

ZM: Mmmm, OK, yes.

JD: And that's why, if then you also tie in the modern example, for instance, people can stretch it a long time because you can say people living in this area are still using hairpins for exactly the same purpose, but now they're using a different form. You can put a picture of the new hairpin into the thing so you can say, we

as the people who live in this area have always done this with our hair, just that the implement we use has changed.

GM: The modern version.

JD: Something separated by two hundred years.

LG: So similar to how we talked about the *ukhamba* now as made in plastic by the Chinese, so that would be another item. Shall we take a break for lunch and then after that we can show you how to set up an account to use the system so that you can start searching through it for yourselves.

GM: You can try it out.

LG: OK, so we've gone through, obviously there's the search ability

ZM: This is quite interesting. We can go on and on, spend the whole day.

LG: Ja, and once you know how to use it, you can

TN: May I fetch the steel one at home?

LG: Yeah. Or you can, if you want to, take a photo and then upload it.

ZM: Because we know that's very interesting.

LG: And especially when you're working in the museum because you have access to all the items at Vukani that have the provenance.

GM: And you have a digitisation centre.

JD: On the subject of photographs, when everybody is back, we must take a group photograph.

LG: We love group photographs.

END

Appendix 2.6. FHYA Groutville Workshop Transcript
Five Hundred Year Archive Public Meeting/ Consultation
Luthuli Museum, Groutville
30th June 2017

Facilitators: Jo-Anne Duggan (JD)
Grant McNulty (GM)
Katie Garrun (KG)
Laura Gibson (LG)

Participants: Clinton Taylor (CT)
Nokwanda Gumede (NG)
Xolani Myeni (XM)
Thuli Mtshali (TM)
Boyzie Myeni (BM)
Zandile Manzini (ZM)
Leon Nxumalo (LN)
Crosby Luhlongwane (CL)
Meluzi Zulu (MZ)
Menzi Mthethwa (MM)
Thandekile Luthuli (TL)
Percy Mdululi (PM)
Onamandela Zikhali (OZ)
Siyabonga Nxaba (SN)
Thully Gumede (TG)
Kiki Mzoneli (KM)

START

GM: So the more you can, we don't want to come here and say, here's our project, you guys must use it and think that it's cool. We would like you to say, yes, no

LG: How to make it cool

GM: Ja, how to make it cool, ja. And then, so, as Laura said, our materials come from different institutions, so one of the examples that I use is I looked for stuff, Dlamini, because Dlamini's come from Swaziland and they come from KwaZulu-Natal. So, so we have materials from the Swaziland Oral History project. It was a project at Wits University in Johannesburg. And we also have Dlamini materials from the Killie Campbell library in Durban. So this type of project says you put in one search term and it searches across different institutions. We don't have everything on here but, but the idea is that you'll be able to search different materials, , different institutional materials, that you'll be able to find stuff in different places.

LG: And the great things is it's useful if you're searching for your family history, that would be one way of using it. I also know we've got some artists here as well, so if you were looking for some inspiration from, older items as well to make something creative today. Also, if you wanted to look at the way people were writing. I don't know if there's any poetry in there.

GM: No, not at the moment.

LG: But also ways of writing. I know we've got some writers here.

GM: But the idea of the project is that we're looking at the pre-colonial, before Europeans came to the area we focus on. Swaziland, a part of southern Swaziland, and KwaZulu-Natal. So what was happening before Europeans came. Now you might say, how do we know that? How do we know? There's nothing recorded, or it was oral, or we don't have information. But if you start looking in museum collections, people are collecting stuff, they're putting it in Europe. They're putting it, they're sending it to Jo'burg, they're sending it to Cape Town. They, they collecting stuff, recording stuff. We have some audio recordings from 1908 that were recorded on wax which later melted but, but, in World War Two. They're in Austria, in Europe. But, so, these will become part of the project. We have digital audio recordings of people speaking and singing Zulu in 1908. And then you say, how do we know about clans? We have [...], you know you can clans or *izibongo*. And you say, how, I want to know more about my clan. So in 1908, sorry, even before that, there's this guy called James Stuart. I don't know if I've put that up. Yes, here you go. The James Stuart Archive. So this, this was a guy, a colonial official, born in what's now KwaZulu-Natal, and he talked, he, he spoke fluent Zulu, he recorded clan histories in English and Zulu. And he wrote all about them and now we have, they're available. But they're from, like, a hundred and twenty or a hundred and thirty years ago. So this is what comes up if we search Luthuli. We get some examples from the James Stuart Archive, that exact archive, from a hundred and twenty or a hundred and thirty years ago. We get, James Stuart interviewed a load of people, so we get the interview from [...] and in there, there's a reference to Luthuli. The praises of [...] with imitations and praises of Luthuli people. OK. That's one example. Here, there's, I found another example. In a conversation, in an interview with [...] where they talk about the Luthuli people. And it says, presumably Martin Luthuli who became the leading member of the American Zulu Mission community at Groutville, which is pretty much where we are, he was elected chief in 1908. And you know that, maybe you don't know that. But this provides more information about the Luthulis. It's [...] here, presumably being a potential informant on Luthuli history. [...] was a Luthuli chief in the Maphumulo division. Did you know that? I didn't.

LG: Did you know that Clinton?

CT: No.

GM: So, so, so there is a lot of information because this guy was recording stuff. There's mountains of papers in the Killie Campbell Library. They've now been published as this book which is, there's six volumes. The James Stuart Archive which is now a published book and we have made it so you can search through all the books, and you can also search through all the other stuff, all the stuff in many different institutions in South Africa and in Europe.

LG: Could you tell us a few of those other institutions that are involved?

- GM: Yup, so, or shall we maybe search someone else's surname quickly? Who else do we have?
- NG: Gumedede.
- GM: Gumedede. Now we don't have everything up here, so I'm sure that there should be some Gumedede stuff but I can't guarantee it. We just have to wait a little while. Seven mentions. So in time there will be more Gumedede stuff. There's an interview with Christian Cane. Sorry, it just takes a little while to load up. So this was done on the third of October, 1907, which is a hundred and ten years ago. So Christian Cane, I don't know who he is, but, OK, in this case he gave a lot of information. There's one guy, there was a Gumedede guy there. So, but, there are all these different interviews with people who knew about the history of the different clans. So, you know, you talk about Zulu. There's. Who's Zulu? Yeah.
- XM: [...] Zulu (pointing at neighbour)
- GM: People speak Zulu, they call themselves Zulu, and the Zulu Royal family. But there's a lot more history, a lot more clans in KwaZulu-Natal. This provides some kind of resource where you can access that history from a hundred years ago, or more. So it's not just *isibongo*, it's not just *isithakazelo*, it's much more. It's where people, you can find out what people said a hundred and ten, or a hundred and twenty, or a hundred and thirty years ago.
- LG: And Grant, with things like the oral history recordings on the wax cylinders, when that's all on there, that will also have some information about who was on that?
- GM: Recording it, yeah.
- LG: It could be that there's a Gumedede speaking on there, and through this they would be able to listen to their voices of their ancestors?
- GM: Yup, so then we'd be able to, we don't have a lot audio examples but if, for example, there was a Gumedede who was speaking in, who was recorded in 1908 and said Gumedede, it will pick up that and you can hear many years before there was WhatsApp audio or before there was any kind of recording device, just this old wax cylinder going round, you'd be able to hear what's on there. Let me see if I can find you, excuse me, this is just taking a bit of time to load up. Here's the progress bar, so it's only one step that loads up to see some results.
- LG: Thuli, just because you've just arrived, we've been talking about a project that Grant and Jo-Anne and Katie are involved in that's called the Five Hundred Year Archive project, which is pulling together items, material culture items, oral histories, recordings, archival material as well, into one place so that you can access. We're just looking at some people's surnames to see what there is there about them.
- GM: So we've found, if we look at Mthethwa, interviews with [...] and you can go in [...] and, when this loads up, maybe we should just give it two minutes to load.

- LG: Do you want to, whilst that's loading, just talking about where some of that stuff came from, Grant?
- GM: Yes, so, I mean, the idea is that, I suppose many of you are young so you just plug stuff in Google and you expect, you know, results to come up. But to try and get materials that are in institutions, and to try and allow people to digitise materials and make them available online, is a very difficult thing. Difficult because people are, you know, you don't want to give all of our materials because then people won't come to our museum, or no-one will come to our institution. So our project is trying to say, well let's get at those materials, let's try to get at the stuff. We don't only look at it, , we don't only look at museums. We want to make a system that can work across different institutions so we want to work across geography, so you can access stuff in England, or in Austria, or in Europe, stuff that's relevant. You can get stuff from Johannesburg, you can potentially get stuff from the British Museum, you can get stuff from Iziko, and you'll be able to search it through the one website.
- LG: Which is obviously a lot more accessible than trying to get a flight down to Iziko.
- JD: Can I just, because I've only newly come to the FHYA, so I can see what Grant is saying is assuming a huge amount of knowledge on everybody's part. I want to just try and explain it in the way I understood it, how it was explained to me in terms of what I have to do with it which is to bring it to the public. So we all know about museums, like this museum. We all know that museums have lots of things in them. We know that those things come into museums in different ways. So what this system has done is say let's look at where stuff from KZN is in museums. And then let's look and see how it got into museums. So you say take the cup and bottle like this, for example. And we know that those things go into a museum, they're collected, so someone needs to go and look at the things that were collected a long time ago. Some of them would've come to KZN, they would've gone visiting around the countryside, they would've said, ooooh that's a nice looking cup, they would've taken that back to the museum, And when they got to the museum, they would've said, oh it comes from KZN, it's a Zulu cup. They wouldn't often say anything else about it. So the museum sits there with a cup they say is called Zulu, but they don't know who made that cup, they don't know who, why the cup was made, they don't know how the cup was used. They just know, this is a Zulu cup. There's a whole lot more to the cup than that. But then some collectors also used to write a lot of notes. So they'd write a diary while they travelled around. They'd say, today I went to this place and I saw a wonderful cup and I discovered that the person who made this cup lived down the road and so I wrote his name down and he told me this story about the cup. But when he goes back to the museum, they take the cup and they put it into the museum collection, and they say, these are quite interesting notebooks, and they send those away to a library. Then, in the beginning, the person who got the cup at the museum might say, oh if I want to know more about this cup, I must remember the notebook. A hundred years later, you go into a museum and someone says, here's a cup. People have forgotten about the notebook because there's no way to connect the two. This one doesn't tell us who collected it, doesn't tell us anything. The story is in that one which is in another building

down the road. So what the FHYA does is, it goes, it went to museums all over the world because we know a lot of stuff was taken away, particularly from KZN, and it said, show us all the stuff you've got that's called Zulu. And then working like detectives, went to look in the libraries and other places, sometimes in the universities, to find the information they could put next to this to say, in that one parcel there was this notebook and that cup, so we pull it together on a system like that. Now if you go to those institutions, you can go to the museum and say, OK show me the Zulu cup, but you can't go to the library and say show me the notebook because you won't know the notebook exists, and neither will the museum. So that's why we bring all of this information into one place. Also, because things came from KZN, which as we know was taken by the colonising people, they looked at it differently. They didn't say, we'll put this in the museum with other artworks, we put this in a museum that's about how people live. So they say, this goes into an ethnography museum. We don't put it with, so we've got all our English things in this museum, and we put all our things from Africa in that museum because they're not the same. And so you can find some things went into one museum, some things go into a library, and some things go into a different kind of museum. So when Grant talks about crossing the boundaries, he's talking about crossing the boundaries between what we call a museum and what we call a library, what we call an archive, what we might call a fine art museum, a natural history museum, or an ethnography museum. Because you might take one collection and it might be scattered all the way across those things. He also talked about geographies. So one of the most amazing things are, I discovered recently, or a couple of years ago, was in Lesotho. Lesotho, as you know, is a very small country. It doesn't have any museums, not even a natural museum. So when they said, how do we get things to put in a museum, we discovered that there was a huge collection of stuff in Lesotho that had been sent across by the British about two hundred years ago, a hundred and fifty years ago, and that was all sitting in the British Library. Now the people in Lesotho haven't got access to things like that. They haven't seen the stuff that was made so long ago. It was sent across in 1863. They haven't seen it at all, they didn't even know it existed. So when he talks about geographies, we can say you can sit in Lesotho and see what's sitting in an island thousands of miles away in England, so that it crosses the geographies from far away and it brings them back here. At our museum, at our meeting yesterday at the Vukani Museum, the geography thing was very interesting to people because the first thing they said was if that's sitting in a London museum, how are we going to bring it home? So what the system does, it's telling us that all these things that are called Zulu, they sitting in London, they sitting in Cambridge, they're sitting in America. But at least with something like this, we can get to see them, we can get to learn something about them. That's where I think this system is amazing.

LG: And I think also something we spoke about at the last workshop when we were looking at the items was, when we saw those blank cards, was all of the stories that you guys had about them and about your grandmothers using the items, about how you had seen them in different places, were never ever recorded because nobody thought that was important, the people who were taking the stories. Obviously, especially when we spoke about the *ukhamba*, I remember

everybody had a story contributing. So something that the system allows you to do is start putting your stories into that as well, so that it's not just an outsider's point of view. So everything that we spoke about at the workshop last time which was your fantastic knowledge that no-one else had, so then you can recording that so that people have that as well.

JD: And I'm sure that sooner or later Grant is going to tell the hairclip, hairpin story.

GM: I will, yup.

JD: With yesterday's comment.

GM: Yup.

LG: Are you [...]?

CT: Try using firefox. The internet connection is quite slow.

GM: Ja.

CT: It's sometimes better, faster.

GM: Firefox works better.

CT: Yup. For me.

GM: And should I be, is this the correct one?

CT: Yes.

GM: I mean, what I, I'll try in a minute, in the meantime.

JD: The two of you were going to ask each other some questions.

GM: Well in the meantime at least we have some stuff up. You can see Mthethwa. When you search it gives you this information [...] was chief of the Mthethwa in the Maphumulo and Lower Tugela divisions. [Quotes from FHYA] Yup, did you know that? Then he says something else. [Quotes from FYHA] So you can see you were cousins, right. Almost. We know Mthethwas and Zulus were related. [Quotes from FHYA] OK, so that's repetition but you. The Gumedes are loading up very slowly. I'll see if I can try and pull this over to Firefox and see if we can get this. Otherwise I think we may just have to move on to the next thing, 'cause it's still waiting to load up.

LG: So Grant, something in the last workshop with the items we were looking at, we looked particularly at six items. We had the pot, which we realised was not a pot but was *Ukhamba*, we had a belt in there

GM: Yup

LG: And some other things associated with the beer drinking. Are there any of those types of items in the Five Hundred Year Archive?

GM: Ja, I mean we can do a search for beer, shall we.

LG: Ja.

GM: It's nearly the weekend so

LG: People have finished exams.

GM: Ok, there's a beer skimmer, or *isikheto*. Shall we click on that? Does this look like what you looked at last time?

LG: Yes, more or less.

GM: OK. Shall I have another look for a skimmer or

LG: No, no, no. And then you have a belt as well.

GM: Yup. I'll just do some searches. And a hairpin we have.

JD: It would be easier if you had only one or two tabs open.

GM: Well, what do you mean? For loading up? It doesn't make too much difference. These have loaded up fine, the others are just working in the background. So we've got the beer skimmer.

LG: So those are quite interesting as well in terms of what we looked at last time on those cards because almost none of the records had names in isiZulu and that's what you were all able to contribute and say this is not just a basket, it's an *isilulu*, it's not a pot, it's an *ukhamba*. And so many of those records that you've been working with, I know that one had *isikheto* on it, but that's not, not common.

GM: No it's not. To have the, the Zulu term is not common. And normally you get things like belt or skimmer or strainer or hairpin, something like that. And we had an example yesterday we'll talk about, the hairpin, which is in fact *hlokoloza*. But no-one else knew that term, or it wasn't recorded when the item was made or collected.

TM: It's called *hlokoloza*, that item we just saw.

LG: The one that you're just going to see. Do you want to go to the story of the hairpin?

GM: Yeah.

TM: That one. You still find it today, like people sell it. I only knew at this time that it's *hlokoloza*. People who grow their hair and then they put for scratching, to *hlokoloza*.

GM: Because to *hlokoloza* is to poke, right.

TM: Yes.

GM: Ja. So I mean you can see here, here we have belt. And we'll go back to the *hlokoloza* now, but it has all this information about when it was collected, under which conditions, but it, there's no Zulu terminology at the moment.

LG: So if that was something that you all knew, and that sort of makes you experts, then you could all contribute the names that you know and someone else could say, oh well where we are we call it something different but that's an amazing resource to have because the records they have in the museum and archives now very often don't have the isiZulu names at all.

GM: So the idea is that all of a sudden you can look at something that was collected a hundred and twenty years ago, and people just collected it as Jo-Anne said, they took it and they put it in an archaeological collection, or they put it in an ethnographic museum, or an art museum, or whatever it was. They don't have information about it. Now people in, in the present can say, oh, we call that *hlokoloza* in Groutville. Maybe in, , there was another name, someone said they call it, there was another name

LG: *Isibhamba*

GM: *Isibhamba*. Someone else called it, in Eshowe they called it

LG: *Isifociya*.

GM: *Isifociya*, yup.

BM: It's a belt.

GM: Yup.

LG: So post pregnancy

NG: You put it

GM: Ja, so for example you have a belt that was collected, again, in 1905. A hundred and thirteen years ago. People now can say, maybe the Groutville people, oh that's called *isifociya*. We know that up the way, people in Eshowe say, oh yeah, in some areas they call it *isifociya* but we call it *isibhamba*. That allows people to, it adds to the record. It makes more resources, richer resources, and it collects Zulu language resources. So if you, for example, put in *isifociya* where you can comment on the bottom here, then the next time someone searches for *hlokoloza* or *isifociya* or *isibhamba* the record will come up. So what everyday people write becomes part of, of the resource.

KG: So your comments become part of the website. Adding, add, add all the time.

LG: And Grant you perhaps have a plan to make the whole site in isiZulu.

GM: Ja, it's a long-term plan. I don't know, at first we need to finish the project and get it up and running but we do have a Zulu translator [...] also from up North in Empangeni, the idea is she will be able to translate everything into isiZulu. Instead of saying search, it would say, like, *sesha*. [...] So the idea is it will be a Zulu website. So I mean an example of it being, people being able to search the comments, yesterday we did the surnames and we had a guy, Sabelo Nkabinde, and he and everyone, we had Ntulis, Xulus, we had

LG: Nxumalo

GM: Nxumalo. And we searched their names and some stuff came up. And then we searched Sabelo Nkabinde's name and nothing came up. So, now, with him, we were able to put up a comment "*uphi umlando Nkabinde?*" and that now becomes searchable. Someone says, oh, he's saying where's the Nkabinde history on this website? Maybe someone else knows some information about it, they know *isithakazelo*, or they know about, they have something written about the history of the Nkabindes. They can then upload and add it to the website. It

also becomes searchable. So the next time, instead of someone searches for Nkabinde, they don't just find "*uphi umlando Nkabinde?*", they find a whole new resource where someone who is from the general public has contributed a history of the Nkabindes as they see it, or *isithakazelo*, or they just wrote something, they put in a hyperlink and sent, they showed someone where they can find more information.

LG: Shall we have a look at the hairpins as an example?

GM: Ja.

LG: Something that was collected very long ago, and then trying to find out the story of how that came to be, and the detective work you can do through the system and then how that comes into the future as well.

GM: Shall we first talk about, just to show this example. So yesterday. Of how people can interact. Yesterday we showed people this hairpin and they said, oh, we call that *hlokoloza*. That's what they, they taught us. It's a hairpin again, collected in 1905, as you can see, but there's not that much information about it. It was collected by a guy called A C Haddon, Alfred Court Haddon, an old colonial guy.

NG: [...]

GM: What's that, sorry?

NG: It was collected by?

GM: A guy called Alfred Court Haddon. There you go.

LG: You're going to get one hundred percent on the test at the end.

GM: It's a pop quiz, yeah.

KG: No, it's a good name to know. He collected tonnes and tonnes of stuff.

JD: Maybe you should just finish the story about how people input before you tell the bigger story about the hairpin.

GM: Ja, but, that is what I'm doing. So there wasn't, there's not that much information about it. You can see again there's not information about what it's called in Zulu. So then someone said, oh we call that *hlokoloza*, I've got one at home. So Thandi Nxumalo drove home quickly and brought her *hlokoloza* back. And she said, here, look at it. They make it in China now, the Chinese shop, the kids down the road sell it. So then we, Sabelo Nkabinde who didn't have information about his surname, he created a user account and he then wrote, my dear friend Thandi has a modern version of this and it is called *hlokoloza*. And then you can see here, it says add file. They were able to, well we all did it as a team effort, to add a *hlokoloza*. We took a photo. Does that look good? That's what you're used to?

LG: Is that a good one?

GM: And they could put in information. They said, who produced it? The Chinese shop they said. What do you call it? *Hlokoloza*. Here's the description: it is

about 15cm long with round plastic melted head and it's made in China. The main use is for scratching and itching scalp, and also for decoration.

TM: Ja, for your hair. Maybe if you tie it and you scratch it.

GM: Yeah, stick it in.

LG: Do any of you have them as well at home, or is it something that young women would use, or old women tend to use?

TM: Young and old. IT's mainly used by those people who do their hair extensions. It becomes itchy so it helps because it is very sharp. Has the sharp edge, so it's useful.

GM: Otherwise they pat their hair. Ja. People pat their hair.

(Laughter)

GM: But maybe the *hlokoloza* works better.

TM: Very much better.

GM: Who has one? Who's got a *hlokoloza*?

(Laughter)

LG: What does it look like?

KG: Is it better than that one? Show the top one.

ZM: It's like that one.

LG: Same colours, everything?

TM: We have different colours because it's mass produced.

LG: So the one you have Zandile, what sort of colours are they?

ZM: It's black.

LG: OK. So you just use it functionally, you wouldn't wear it for decoration so much?

ZM; Maybe if I have a weave on I would wear it for decoration.

GM: OK, so functional and fashionable. You can scratch and then stick it in the top.

KG: So you can also use it for decorations.

GM: So someone could say, when they see the *hlokoloza*, oh, I mean that *hlokoloza*'s cool

JD: Put it in, put it in.

GM: Sure. What do you want to say? What would you say about *hlokoloza*? What do you think about this one?

JD: No, tell us about your one first. Say I've also got one, and tell us exactly what you said now. When would you use it?

ZM: I use it for

LG: Z. Zandile

GM: Zandile. Sorry.

ZM: I use it for scratching. A lot. It's mainly for scratching. And then because, because when the scalp starts getting itchy, you don't have time to put your hand in your bag to look for it, so it's better if you keep it here [points to head] so when you put it here it's easy, you just take it out and scratch it and then you put it back in. When you putting it back, it's, it's doing another function which is to look.

LG: And do you remember where you bought it from? Was it a special purchase or just something, I need it and so I just buy it in a store?

ZM: Actually I bought it in town, in a Chinese shop actually. I went to buy something and I also bought this.

JD: And it's exactly the same as the one pictured here?

ZM: Same version, but different colour.

JD: Because that looks like a very long stalk.

GM: Yup.

JD: And so it was bought in Durban.

ZM: No, here in KwaDukuza.

JD: Groutville. In Groutville.

LG: It's funny, it's the same as, was it Bongeka who was talking about having the plastic *Ukhamba* last time, I think it was. She was saying she also had that for decoration and it was made in China as well.

(Pause)

LG: Is it a valuable item? Is it precious to you?

ZM: The *hlokoloza*?

LG: Yup. Or if you lost it, you would be OK and just get another?

ZM: I'd buy another one, just.

JD: How much do they cost?

NG: Five rand.

GM: I'm just waiting for it to load.

ZM: So if I lose it, it's fine, I'll buy another one.

(Pause)

- LG: So Grant, if Zandile contributes information or any of them do contribute there, their names will be acknowledged and that information appears next to their names. Is that right?
- GM: Yeah, so in the example of Sabelo, he had his own user account and could then submit something, and you'll see who contributed something and when, so for example, I use this one, I created an account for amateur historian and it gives you a little bio when you go over and look at the person's name. If you don't put the bio, it says no bio set, so you don't see who says what. But Zandile would have her own user account and she would be able to submit content.
- LG: Something we will try to do later is set up everyone with user accounts so you can contribute. So then Boyzie you would have Boyzie Myeni and when your name came up, you would have poet, stage manager, event manager, like that. Thuli, artist, jewellery maker. And then Grant, when that information goes in there, if you contribute it, do, for example, would Zandile have any control over how that information is used in the future?
- GM: Well I mean the idea of this type of platform is that things will be shared so we have worked hard to try to get institutions to share their materials, so we, the whole website would be licensed under creative commons license, which means that you can reuse materials, but you can't make money off them and you can't change them. So the comments would also become part of that. If someone uploads something like the picture of the *hlokoloza* and they later want it to be deleted, they can request for it to be deleted. But otherwise the idea is that it's the sharing of information and bringing materials out of their previous houses in institutions.
- LG: But unlike in previous museum records where a lot of times people who were telling the stories, the Zulu speaking people telling the stories, their names never made it into the records.
- GM: Yup.
- LG: In this system, your names are in it, you're acknowledged.
- GM: And you would have an account, and you would have, be recognised.
- LG: And is there somebody at the Five Hundred Year Archive who is moderating those comments, who says whether they can go on, or not?
- GM: Yes, so the idea is that with all websites you need to have a moderator otherwise people just spam you. They say, oh look at this, buy this Gucci bag, or look at this, download this. Do you want a Gucci bag? Ja.

(Laughter)

- GM: They just put on spam links the whole time. So you need someone to moderate something. And to make sure it, well we have guidelines where we say if, as long as something is not deemed to be racist, homophobic, sexist, or otherwise offensive, we will publish it. So we're not looking for truth in anything. Really, if someone said the Zulu kingdom is or was the only kingdom in KwaZulu-Natal, and someone else like an Mkhize said well actually [...] had his own

kingdom and the Mkhize kingdom was also a kingdom, we, it's not our job to say this is true, or that's not true, or to intervene in the discussion. It's our job to create a platform where people can comment on materials and have that kind of discussion.

LG: And you are looking for, as well, the personal histories? The sort of, I have one of these, my grandfather had one of this.

GM: Well, yeah, there's a clear example. Again we look at our friend Sabelo Nkabinde. And he says that he, he said that he when we looked at strainers, he said, oh. We looked at a beer strainer and he said that, oh, I have six of these at home. So he could comment on. Which beer strainer.

LG: Or was it a skimmer?

KG: It was a skimmer.

GM: OK, excuse me. I don't think it's a skimmer. Oh, it was. So Sabelo then says, looking at this beer skimmer he can enter

NG: What's it used for?

GM: Excuse me?

KG: What's it used for? It should say what it's used for, a general note. You should be able to, if you're interested in that kind of thing. You should be able to go on there and say, OK cool what's it used for?

GM: Or at least what it was used for.

KG: Ja.

GM: But it depends on the level of information that has been recorded.

LG: So that's a lot of what you contributed last time, right. There was nothing about that so with the pot, you said this was used for drinking beer, the belt was used after pregnancy to get your stomach back, and then a couple of items that said they were Zulu were not, like that strange puzzle thing. Do you remember that? The two pieces of wood.

KG: It would be nice if we commented on what it was used for.

GM: I'll try and switch to another browser but it's going to take me five minutes to set up.

LG: OK, shall we take a break?

GM: Yes, I think so.

LG: OK, let's take a break. Fill up your teas and coffees and we'll come back and have a look at another couple of things and also have a chance to set you up on laptops, on cell phones and see if you can have a go searching for things. So, yeah, let's take five minutes.

[Break. Just before camera is turned on, LN asked question about whether material would be available to download and use offline]

GM: I don't think the institutions would let us. I'm not sure, but.

KG: Ja, it's an online platform.

LG: So at the moment

JD: Sorry, just explain the question a little bit more.

LN: No I wanted to read these. So I wanted to know if I could access them without having to go online.

LG: Because you don't have

JD: Everything that is online comes from the institutions. So everything online should theoretically be available to you. But some of the stuff we might have to go to Cambridge in the United Kingdom to look at, some of the stuff we might have to go to London to look at, some of the stuff we might have to go to America to look at. But the interviews that I think you're talking about, the James Stuart interviews, you can go to Durban to the Killie Campbell museum.

LG: Leon, what you were saying is you don't have any internet access outside of here, you don't have any data, so was there a way how you could access the electronic copies without that. And at the moment that's not

JD: You can't access the electronic copies but you can go and read them. So we know with the James Stuart Archive, where I think a lot of those interviews are James Stuart Archive.

GM: Yup.

JD: The Vukani Museum has got the full set of books. It's eight volumes. They've got the full set of books up in Eshowe. So you could actually go there. The challenge that you would have there is you would have to look through eight volumes and you would have to try and find whatever it is you want to read. There isn't an electronic way of switching those documents.

KG: That's a problem.

JD: And the indexes don't really tell you much. But you can, you know, because before computers, that's what people did. They used those. So theoretically everything that is here, you should be able to access somewhere. The kind of information that you can't access is the information that belongs to the museum, things like the cards that they use in their accession system. So every object's got a little card that tells you the story of that object, or as much as they capture. That as an ordinary visitor, you wouldn't be able to access.

LG: And also some of the materials, right.

JD: And you wouldn't be able to access the materials unless they were on display. And with the museum, you know, some of the big museums have ten million things in storerooms and one on display. So that's one of the things this Five Hundred Year Archive does, it pulls all that stuff that's hidden from the public view, and makes it available online. The challenge that we are understanding more and more today as we did yesterday, is that the online access is very problematic. You know, we thought yesterday was going to be a problem and we

organised a cell phone with data so we could set up a hotspot, today we thought there was internet access in the museum that we should use, so we weren't worried. But now we realise that actually, this is a big problem. It's going to be a big problem, particularly for people to use this system and put information into the system. And we going to have to think about that.

GM: Well one option, for example, would be, we could say have a local version at the Luthuli Museum but then if you want to comment or anything, that wouldn't work.

JD: No.

KG: But it would work for research purposes. I mean that's what you're saying. You could read the James Stuart Archive. There's just so much information.

GM: Can I ask a question to you guys? Do you, are you, so James Stuart Archive we saw a little bit how you can search for Gumede, you can search Mthethwa, you can look at who the chief was in the Maphumulo district however many years ago. I mean, but, so that can tell you about your history, it can tell you about the areas etc., but what about these materials? I mean do they, are you interested in those kind of things like looking at what museums have or, whether you look at a hairpin or *hlokoloza* many years ago. Or you look at beer strainers, or you look at, are you interested in seeing that stuff? Does it mean something to you?

Many Participants: Yes

GM: Yup.

LG: So the thing is

BM: It reminds you of where you come from actually.

GM: Yup.

BM: When you see the materials that our great grandfathers had, it brings back the memory of the way that we should be living.

GM: Yup.

LG: So it is very important to you to have those. So it's how to get those to you.

KG: So for example, that hairpin, where is that? I can't remember. Is that MAA?

GM: It's in Cambridge, ja.

KG: So that's in Cambridge.

JD: OK, you haven't told the hairpin story.

GM: OK, then we can have a storytelling session. So I think, but also, this is linked into knowing who you are, like a sense of identity. So as were, as Laura was talking about, I'm sure you saw in the session before that you had in December here, those of you who attended, much of the stuff in museums is generically categorised. It's called Zulu. Maybe Zulu, question mark. It says Zulu 1925, something like that. There's not information about who created it, when did they create it, why did they create it. So part of our project, the big part, is to look at

provenance. And provenance means exactly that. Who created something, under which conditions, what was the purpose for them in creating it, then what happened to that thing. How did it, someone collected it, a colonial guy collected it and had it in his private possession. Then his friend said, oh I like that, can I include it, I'm going to start the Natal Museum. And then that went from the private collection into the Natal Museum, which then became the KwaZulu-Natal Museum. So you can see how these objects move through time and how they get to us in the present. But then, at the same time, that categorisation is just carried over. Zulu, Zulu, Zulu. And sometimes it's not even Zulu at all. If, for example, you look at the people in south KwaZulu-Natal, where the central power was predominantly in the north with Shaka and the Zulu Kingdom, if you look south with the Mkhizes, the Makhane (?), the people who migrated, they were often called *amalala*, like they weren't thought of as proper Zulus. So, and they, what was it [...], they speak with their, you know *amalala*, their tongues are sleeping in their mouths. So they don't have the strong *click, click, click*, that the people up further north have. And a lot of stuff was collected there and then they just say, oh, you know, it's Zulu, but in actual fact it's not. So, so, let's see if we can at least get this picture up. Is it loading?

LG: Does anyone else have any questions as well while we just wait for that to load? Yes, Zandile.

ZM: Is this system available on systems in all constitutions?

LG: So is it available to everybody?

ZM: Because at school I can use Google Scholar, so if you want to get access to information, you go to Google Scholar because you're not allowed to use the normal Google that everybody uses. Because it gives false information.

KG: Yup, absolutely.

LG: Oh, OK.

ZM: So is it, that, available in all institutions?

KG: In browsers, that kind of thing? When it's up, it's not up yet, we're still testing it, it will definitely be available because, like you say, you're looking for reputable sources. And Google Scholar, it would be the same, you'd be able to search for it. Firefox, Google Scholar definitely.

GM: Through your phone.

KG: All browsers, ja. When it is up, we're still testing it.

GM: So here's the pin here. This is the information we have about it. 1905, that's when it was collected. And we now it was collected by this guy Haddon. But we don't know any other information about it.

TM: So we don't know what it's made of?

GM: Er, ja, we do know. Sorry. It's made out of wood and, it says, bead. I'll show you the description. But the catalogue card, so this is in the Museum of Anthropology and Archaeology in Cambridge. So the museum information that

we have about it is, comes from Africa, Southern Africa, Republic of South Africa, Zululand. The it says what it is: a wooden hairpin with beaded head. It was part of this exhibition. It used to be in EM644KM., but it's now in Box 33D something, something, something, June 1987. Information about how it's been stored in the museum over there. But we don't have a lot of information about it. So then.

LG: So there's nothing there, Grant, there's no isiZulu name, there's no name of who made it, there's no name of what it was used for

GM: And who collected it, the provenance stuff I'm talking about. No information about who made it and why they donated it etc., etc. So then what our researchers, one of our researchers was able to uncover, she worked a lot with beadwork and she worked at the Johannesburg Art Gallery in what they called the traditional collections, so she is able to identify beads and she looks at things like baskets and beads and belts etc., etc., etc. and does research. And she was able to find in her research another thing in the Pitt Rivers Museum. So a different institution in England. OK, so we're still here in KwaZulu-Natal. In 1905 these guys collected something. One goes to the Pitt Rivers Museum, the other one goes to the Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. Then in 2012, this lady who works at the Johannesburg Art Gallery, found something else, finds another pin that looks pretty much identical to this one. Let's load it up so that you can see. But if not, OK. So what she finds out about this one in Pitt Rivers Museum, she finds out provenance information. She finds out that in fact this one was made by the wife of Chief Tetelegu who was a Zondi chief who was a chief in a place called Swartkop near Pietermaritzburg and she finds out that this guy who collected it, his name was Henry Balfour. H Balfour. So he collects it, and he collected it at the same time as Haddon. So he collected it, this pin, she assumes, this, no it's not going to, but we're lucky we have the other one at least. She assumes that this one collected by Haddon and that goes to Cambridge was collected, and she does research about it, was collected at the same time as the one collected by Balfour that goes to the Pitt Rivers. And she says that this was collected at Chief Tetelegu's kraal on 26th August 1905. It was made by his wife, his kraal was in Swartkop which was next to Pietermaritzburg and he was a Zondi chief. So all of a sudden, instead of only knowing that this was collected by Haddon and it's made out of wood and has a beaded head, and it's called Zulu, we actually realise we have information about who made it. Chief Tetelegu's Zondi wife. When did she make it? She made it around 1905, it was collected on 26th August 1905. That's quite detailed information. How was it collected? It was collected during these guys' visit, going to see Tetelegu, Haddon and Balfour. So that starts giving us a bit more information, in fact a lot more information about these things than just being generic Zulu items. And when you start thinking about how you might start making richer or fuller descriptions of these materials, you can see that a platform like this, a digital platform allows that because it takes it out of the institution, puts it on the Internet and says, this is the information we know about it and then it says, OK, a researcher can do some research and say, well this pin looks like the one in Pitt Rivers at this time and place and made by Chief Tetelegu's wife. She puts up that information. Then Thandi Nxumalo in Eshowe

says, oh, we have these things now, in the present, you know one hundred and twelve years later, except now they're made out of plastic and metal and are made by Chinese, by the Chinese shops and sold by kids in the street and we call it *hlokoloza*. So all of a sudden all of these different bits of information become one better bit of information. So it's the institutions saying we collected all this stuff during the British Empire, during the colonial a. We collected it, we have loads of it, we don't have loads of information about it. Here it is online.

LG: And Grant, if, for example, Zandile makes a comment, on the hairpin that is in the Cambridge MAA, Museum, then will that museum in Cambridge read her information and take note of that in their exhibitions, in their records?

GM: Sure. I mean

JD: No, you can't say sure. We can say it will be there for them to access.

GM: No, no, you can't say sure. Sorry, I was just saying OK. Sure. I can't say for sure but the British Museum which has a huge collection of stuff, we spoke to them a bit, and they said they would love this type of interaction to enrich their collection. So not only would they make this stuff available to people in areas from where the materials were collected, or they think they were collected, they would like people to comment and hopefully that material becomes part of their records, or at least it stimulates some kind of discussion about

LG: So it starts changing who writes the history. It's not just that institution, it's much more of a

GM: Yup, Thandi Mxumalo becomes someone who has valuable information about the materials.

LG: Zandile has.

GM: Yup, Zandile. It's, the idea is that you can find information about the stuff that was there in the precolonial period. You can comment and say, look, this still happens today., we have a different version of it or we have *isibhamba* or *isifociya*

JD: One of the reasons that this is very important is if you are a student, for example, and you are involved in all the discussions around decolonial curriculum, is it provides a way for people to start changing that. And to say the information we have about those objects comes from a colonial collector. As the people from who the materials were collected, we can start changing the information so we can challenge the colonial interpretation and start correcting a history that is written by the people who are the descendants of people who owned those objects. But it makes a very minute intervention into something like that.

KG: Also, I think one of the interesting parts that I don't think you've talked about was the idea that this project aims to be interdisciplinary, which means it's not just for people who are looking at a particular subject. So say you're looking at jewellery design, you'd be very interested in looking at that for the beadwork and that kind of thing. And someone else is studying anthropology and looking at it from a different angle, it's not just focussing on people who are studying one thing. So if you're studying history or you're studying design, or if you're

studying anything, it lays it out so it's not just for people looking at one subject. So I think that's part, part of the aim to try and do that.

LG: Would you use it? And what would you use it for?

KG: Ja, that's important.

LG: Would you use this? Would you contribute to it? Would you use it as a reference?

BM: What, the pin?

LG: No, the system.

KG: Any of it.

BM: Yes, I think I would.

LG: Would you use it in your work?

BM: Actually, I can use it in my living environment.

LG: OK.

BM: Cos most of the time I'm working with different kinds of people in different kinds of environments, so people need to get different kinds of knowledge sometimes and so yes.

JD: Can you give us an example? That's a very interesting point. What would you use it for, a particular purpose?

BM: Er, some people comes maybe asking, what are you doing? Then I'll say, this day I'm doing something like this. They'll be interested, what exactly are you talking about? Then I'll say to them, no, I want to know more about *ibeshu*, please help me on that. And if they've got that source for that sort of knowledge, they'll give me something they know about *ibeshu* and then I'll have to go to another one. If there's something I know about that the same person doesn't, then I have to give some more information there.

LG: And in terms of writing your stories, or your film scripts, would you ever use this as sort of research for that, for finding out a historical background for your storyline?

BM: It might depend on what my story is based on. But if it's based on cultural activity, then I will use it.

LG: OK. Thuli, would you ever use it as a space for inspiration in your designs, or Crosby at all?

TM: Yes, I would cos I think this one has more power as compared to the one that is being created in the modern day now because now, as I said, it's mass produced, it doesn't have that value that it used to before. That's why you can keep this object for a certain reason and now people use it for an everyday use but it doesn't have that cultural value as I look at that image that it tells a story. A different type of story.

- GM: Like Zandile, was it Zandile who said, well if I lose it, it costs five bucks so I'll buy another one.
- BM: Actually, the thing is about these materials, the cultural materials, the value of them is not based on money. It's built on the beauty and the message. Cos each and every thing, each and everything they got they create comes with a certain message, comes with a certain feeling for the artist.
- GM: What do you think about looking at stuff online versus looking at stuff in real life?
- LG: So looking at stuff online versus going to the museum.
- JD: Before we look at that can we just go back to the design question again. You reflected and you started talking about the value between the new and the traditional. Would you think to yourself, if I started making jewellery in the present, it might be useful to see how people made it in the past because I might be able to find something there that was beautiful that I might want to change for the present?
- TM: Ja. I think, I think ja.
- LG: So you might see that and think
- TM: It would inspire me more than what I see is being used every day.
- GM: Because weren't people, I remember people wearing new *amacici*, it was a fashion, or not? The big earrings.
- TM: That goes inside.
- GM: The plugs.
- TM: That were worn by the Shembe.
- CL: The studs?
- GM: No, not the big, big ones, but the small ones.
- [Short group discussion, inaudible]
- CL: But, also, they used to have those piercings. But it wasn't really for earrings, it was just piercings because they would have not an earring inside of them
- GM: It's just the hole.
- CL: Yes. That's how when people first started piercing ears, they had a [...] of putting [...] And then as you grow [...] and then as by age. So it's not the same as that type of earring. Because at the end of it, it's like wood.
- JD: Go back to asking what they'd use it for.
- LG: So we've got Boyzie who might use it for people that you work with in your livelihood, you might use it as research for your scripts, for your stories, Thuli and Crosby might use it as a source of inspiration for designs, Zandile said she would use it for school for Anthropology, would anyone else use it in any other

way? Maybe just being interested in your history, the clan history. Would anyone else use it? If you had great internet access?

KG: Oh, so the question that Grant was asking was how would it be to see, especially objects like this, beautiful objects, to see them on a digital, online on a computer screen rather than actually in person at a museum. What would the different experience be? Like would you

LG: I mean is it as valuable to see this here on the screen as to go to the museum in KwaDukuza and see what they have there?

TM: I think it would have more value if it is stored in a museum because it's where history is stored.

LG: So to actually physically go and see the item would be

TM: [...] lighting

GM: But if you live far away, or if you can't go to England to see it, then I suppose having it on your phone is good.

KG: And also, I suppose, you can see it at home.

CL: But even if you see it not at a museum, it would just be an object. It won't be like, oh it's in a museum. But if, no, it's in a museum and the culture of it, reflects its value there.

KG: Context.

CL: So it's got to have all of those, from the gate into the reception into the gallery.

LG: So like these seeing these pictures around here (points to gallery walls), it's the experience.

CL: Yes, so something like to build up

KG: To build up experience.

CL: So the experience, yes. It's not just visual, not just that. So you get to experience the culture element of it also I think.

GM: Could I ask, do you guys look for this kind of stuff online anyway, or find any stuff? Like I run with the Municipality, we do a project that looks at local history and local culture that also has things like [...] and *isithakazelo* and people look for that stuff. But do you guys go online and find stuff?

BM: [...]

GM: *Isithakazelo*, yup.

LG: And something that we just talked about, how you would use that system, how you would take information from it, would you also be interested in contributing to this system? As we've just spoken about. Would you want to put comments on to that to make it a richer resource? Would you do that on your own?

KG: If you knew something, if you saw this thing and thought, wow, I've got something to say about it.

LG: Do you think you would do that on your own or do you think it would be something like in a group situation, a workshop situation where you get to sit in small groups, discuss it first and then you want to put something on? Like we did in our workshop.

BM: For me, if it happens that I find something on line and I've got extras to add on it, I do add things like that.

LG: OK, so you already do that?

BM: I do.

LG: OK, thank you.

GM: Do you, do you guys use Facebook? Do you write posts and do you update your status?

NG: Always.

GM: Always. Does everyone always? Who doesn't update theirs so long?

LG: Does anyone not have Facebook?

BM: I think we all do.

GM: Do you write updates like, I'm at KwaDukuza, I'm at Luthuli?

CL: Like with Facebook, I see it gives you pop ups like where did you see. [...]

GM: And that's what Facebook does.

KG: Sharing, sharing.

CL: Share, yeah. If everyone's OK, we can just share. And memories also.

JD: So, so, if say, for example, because we find access to the Internet is going to be problematic, if Grant set up a Facebook page and put up some of this information, like one at a time, do you think people would share that?

CL: Definitely. Now I think it's the medium for certain kinds of networks. Especially like I see whenever I want to showcase my works, people say OK, do the Facebook. Before I'll add on WhatsApp also. Because OK, the data situation also.

GM: It's free.

CL: What?

GM: Facebook for free.

KG: Ja, free, but you can't load a lot of stuff. You can read texts.

CL: Ja, but I think it's that downloading. Because you put a picture and then you write. And I think you get the text but don't download. So, ja, it's that Facebook. And data. People are like, I won't download, I'll just view. I'll also do that to save on data.

LG: But you would use your data to look on Facebook?

CL: And once I, then I turn off my data and I can just browse and I know I'm safe because I don't use data.

LG: Is it expensive?

KG: It was a very good idea that Facebook did that option.

GM: Do you ever go to libraries to get free WiFi?

LG: But I think it's far.

GM: It's in town. Is it good Internet?

CL: But you can't download. That's the thing. It's just there for

KG: Ja, that's the thing.

LG: You couldn't, say, upload, something.

CL: Like you can't download stuff and save

KG: If you want to read something later.

CL: Like certain sites, you click on and it redirects you.

KG: Well you see that's the thing that would obviously be ideal, that you were saying, to download to the hard drive. Be able to go somewhere where there is Internet, get a little bit of a download on to your flash drive, external hard drive and read it at home where it's more comfortable. That's ja. There's problems with that. That would be ideal.

CL: [...] If you can have, like, in the library there should be a like a gang [...] like a history gang, where we can access these sites. Like some pages they are framed within the space. You can just go there. A semi museum setting. So we don't have those problems. I've never seen that, I don't even know what it is.

LG: It's a hair pin.

CL: It's a hair pin?

TM: *Hlokoloza*.

CL: *Hlokoloza*. Ja, cause I've seen the Chinese are making a killing with that.

KG: See everybody knows so much about this.

GM: So that's what we put yesterday. The guys at Vukani.

KG: And one lady brought hers.

GM: She brought hers. And then you can.

KG: The new Chinese version.

JD: Put the picture on.

BM: But now if I'm searching on the Internet and I see the one, the other version, if I'm new to it, I don't even have a clue what this item is, where is, where it

originated from. So if I see that new version, I won't be able to know from which tribe does it come from. So I think the new version will confuse.

KG: The posting of the new Chinese. Distracting. Confusing.

LG: Oh this one here.

GM: You're saying because you won't know the details about it.

BM: No. If you go to this one, this one you can see that it's [?]. But if you go to the first one, it shows the original of it.

JD: But look at, just look at the information.

BM: You can see that it's handmade.

JD: The information says bought in 2017 from a Chinese shop.

GM: And also.

JD: It should be, it will be posted with a comment. So you will be able to see them with a comment.

GM: Material contributed by members of the public. And then you see that Sabelo contributed it on that date. And it says, my dear friend Thandi owns a modern version of this and it's called *hlokolza*. And then you click, you click that link. It takes you to the modern *hlokoloza*. And then

KG: The original hairpin would come up first. And then you scroll down and in the comments section someone says, like, I've got a new version. And then you'd click on that and see the new version. But like I know what you mean.

GM: Sorry guys.

KG: It's confusing if you see it for the first time.

JD: But it's a very interesting point that you're making. Because things change over time. And so we can't say we don't put something on just because it's made in China today. Because people here, your great, great, great-grandparents might also have used that thing. They used it for exactly the same purpose as you use the modern version. And the fact that it's changed tells us a whole different kind of story about the world. And how it might've been handmade in the olden days but now it's made and imported from China which tells us about relationships between different countries, different local economies, practices.

GM: Globalisation.

JD: Cultural practices, etc.

KG: The Chinese...making so much money out of it. Everyone's talking about that.

CL: [...]

KG: Exactly.

JD: You'll probably find that the same sort of thing was used all over the world by different people at different times.

- CL: Because I'm sure they used porcupines
- KG: Porcupines.
- CL: Yes, yes, *Hlokoloza*. That was the original *hlokoloza*.
- JD: But if you look at people...three hundred years ago, you will see that they have the same things in their wig. They also all wore these big fancy wigs, they also all wore a pin in them. Now we can say...scratch their hair under the wig, you know. But it tells us something how we as humans share something whereas if you just look at it narrowly, you just say, oh this thing was only made in this village in KZN when there is a much, much bigger story about it. That's how the world is working now.
- CL: Also the Japanese, they tie their hair and they use chopsticks. But then people use them for eating.
- LG: We're going to finish with Grant just showing you how you would set your own accounts up so that if you do want to go back
- JD: Before we do that, can you ask the question about email addresses?
- LG: Yup, who has an email address that they use regularly? Crosby, OK. Does anybody not have an email address that they use? OK, can you put your hand up if you have an email address that you use regularly?
- JD: Seven, OK.
- LG: Perfect, thank you. But everybody has a cell phone number? Anyone not have a cell phone number? OK, everyone's got. OK, so does anyone have any more questions? Yes, go ahead.
- MZ: I am [...]. My question is, these items that were confiscated or taken
- LG: Stolen
- MZ: Into other countries like Cambridge, overseas. Is it possible to bring those items, or to get them back to where they rightfully belong so that we can have access to them?
- LG: That's a long story of repatriation. But it should be possible. But you would need someone who would start making the campaign for that. So something that you could use this system is to actually know the items are there in the first place and where they rightfully belong. Because in a lot of museums it's just a broad classification, from South Africa, from Zululand, you don't know who, where it would go to rightfully belong. So once you know that, you could then start campaigning. You would have to go speak to politicians, the Department of Arts and Culture and ask them to start arguing on your behalf. But you can. You can do it from a grassroots movement. You see something you know should rightfully be back here, then start that process. And in a lot of places in North America where it's a big movement towards repatriation because the Native American Indians there had a lot of their stuff stolen and taken overseas into museums, there's a big repatriation movement. At the moment human remains, parts of people's ancestors were also taken, skulls were taken, other parts of their

bodies taken to be stored in museums and those are being taken back so that they can be rightfully and respectfully buried. So there is a precedence there. But in terms of items, yeah, you can start that process.

JD: But just to say there is a big resistance to that. So some museums will not even open a discussion on that. Like the British Museum. They won't entertain the discussion. But that doesn't mean you can't try.

LN: They have the most stuff too. The British Museum.

LG: But you can start trying. Start the agitation.

LN: We can start today.

JD: The question, some museums might be amenable to discussion. And the first thing they would want to know is how can you prove that belongs to whoever is asking for it back? How can you prove that that belongs to your community? The other question they will ask is where are you going to put it so that it is looked after in the same way that we are looking after it?

LG: Or if you can prove there's a better way of looking after it.

JD: Or a better way.

LG: A more respectful way. So when we spoke about Ukhamba, for example, in a museum it might be in a very sterile box. But you were saying actually it needs to be in umsamo, or it needs to be, the ancestors spoke over it, so different ways it might be better looked after. Their way is not necessarily the only way to do it. Does anyone have any other questions, or would you like us to show you how to set up an account?

?: OK, uh, I think looking at these items, we should also look at advantages and disadvantages.

LG: OK.

?: Because the *hlokoloza*, made in China, worn for decoration, right. Some of the people sleep with these and it's dangerous. Some of the people end up in hospital.

KG: See that's another comment that should go on there.

JD: It's a comment that would be interesting to put on there.

KG: Very useful.

LG: See, you all have so much to say. So can we show you how to set up an account quickly so you can start using that?

GM: We can try.

LG: OK, so if you go into the Five Hundred Year Archive Project, into the home page. Grant, do you want to do this, or shall I?

GM: You can.

LG: Sure? OK. When you go into it, this is the welcome page, hey?

GM: Yup.

LG: OK, so then here you see there's this login section in the top left hand corner. So then you just have to pull that down. If you don't have

GM: OK, so what you can do is, you need an email to set this up so

LG: Or a friend with an email.

GM: Yup, so if you haven't yet registered, then you need to. It says please register here and you click it. And then it takes you and you have to do a new registration page where you have to create a username. And you have to create an email address, or you have to put your email address in and it asks you information about yourself and you then need to confirm you're not a robot.

LG: What about Boyzie? You've got an email address, hey?

BM: Yes.

GM: Do you want to try?

LG: To try setting you up.

BM: OK.

GM: Do you want to come up and do it?

LG: Or do you want to do it from a distance?

BM: No, I can stay.

GM: OK, what do you want your username to be?

BM: Boyzie Myeni

GM: How do you spell it?

BM: M-Y-E-N-I

LG: And your email?

GM: Hang on. And your email address?

BM: Boyzie Myeni at gmail.

GM: OK. Boyzie

LG: Myeni.

GM: What do you want to say about yourself?

LG: Do you want to say you're a poet?

BM: Pardon?

LG: What do you want to say about yourself? You're a poet, you're a film producer.

BM: Yuh. I'm an artist.

LG: You're an artist.

GM: And it says your username has been registered, please check your email for instructions. Should you not receive an email, please check your spam or junk folder. Sometimes these types of registration are in the spam file. So you've got to check your email.

LG: Boyzie, have you got enough data?

BM: No, I don't have.

LG: Do you want to use my phone?

CT: You can use the museum computer.

[Group chatter for several minutes while Boyzie logs into email]

LG: OK, so you've all seen how you could potentially set it up. Sorry that we weren't able to get online faster today to show you, but you know how that is. Has everybody got their transport money, signed for that? And signed the register? Has everyone signed the register?

JD: If you haven't signed or got money, please come to me.

LG: If you haven't signed or got your transport money. And then what we'll do is thank you all very much for coming, giving up your time again. I hope you've got something out of it. And we have some lunch for you over here and some cool drinks. Thank you.

GM: Cool.

KG: Lots of lunch.

JD: Before we go for lunch we'd like to give you a little gift and I'd also like to say I'm terribly sorry things didn't work out as expected. We had expected the Internet problem to be completely resolved today so you wouldn't have to sit around and wait. But we had these special notebooks made especially for the event.

END

**Your community
Your stories
Your culture**

Which objects tell an important story for you?

What would you put in your community museum?

Which stories do you think people need to know?

**Join us for a day of interactive discussions and activities at the
Luthuli Museum.**

***Refreshments & Lunch will be provided.
Public transport costs will be reimbursed.***

Date: Friday, 9 December 2016.

Time: 10:00am – 3:00pm

Place: 3233 Nokukhanya Luthuli St, Groutville, KwaDukuza, 4450.

To book your space, call 032 559 6822 or SMS XXX XXX XXXX

*This research forms part of a King's College London University PhD project RESC
ref no. LRS-16/17-3930.*

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS



REC Reference Number: LRS-16/17-3930

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET

Title of study

PhD fieldwork research: Rethinking museum collections in South Africa

Invitation Paragraph

I would like to invite you to participate in a focus group workshop/interview, which will form part of my PhD project. You should only participate if you want to. Before you decide whether you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. If anything is unclear, please ask me.

What is the purpose of the study?

The aim of this study is to better understand relationships between South African museums and their source communities. Source communities can be described as the communities from which museums originally gathered their collections. I am researching how source communities think about collections of their material culture held in museums. I am interested in the ways source communities would choose to represent their material culture and how digital tools (e.g. cell phones) might make museum collections more representative and accessible. This will involve one day focus group workshops and semi-structured interviews.

Why have I been invited to take part?

I am inviting participants over the age of 16 who self-identify as the source community to take part. The material that I will be sharing at the workshops and interviews was previously classified as Natal Nguni, primarily Zulu, by the South African Museum in Cape Town. It now forms part of the Iziko Museums of South Africa's Social History collections.

Do I have to take part?

No. Participation is voluntary. You should read this information sheet and if you have any questions you should ask me or my PhD supervisor. You should not agree to take part in this research until you have had all your questions answered satisfactorily.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and will be asked to sign a consent form.

The workshop discussions and interviews will be based on a program and topic guide. These are designed to be flexible so as to meet your needs. The discussions will be recorded, subject to your permission and then transcribed, possibly by a third party, if you agree. You will be asked to assign copyright for the transcript to King's College London as part of the consent form. This means King's College London will have the right to reproduce the transcript in full or in part, to prepare derivative works from it, to distribute copies of it, and to display the transcript publicly. You are not obliged to assign copyright.

Even if you have decided to take part in the research, you are still free to cease your participation at any time.

Incentives

There is no financial incentive for taking part in this research. I will cover the cost of your journeys using public transport to and from the workshop/ interview. I will also provide reasonable refreshments during the meeting.

What are the possible benefits and risks of taking part?

There are no foreseeable risks in participating in the study. The main disadvantage to taking part in the study is that you will be donating your time. It is possible that you may find answering some of the questions challenging. This is unlikely but if it were to occur, you can skip the question, leave the workshop session or ask for the interview to be terminated at any time.

Will my taking part be kept confidential?

Anonymity is optional for this research. The consent form offers three levels of anonymity from which participants can choose. You can opt to be identified fully by first and surname. You should remember that information you share may be used in my thesis and that this thesis will be made available electronically in the public domain. You may prefer partial anonymity where you elect to be identified by your

first name only, by a pseudonym, or by an assigned number. This will make it more difficult for others to attribute information to you, even if it is used in the thesis. Finally, you can select absolute anonymity.

You can have your data withdrawn and change your anonymity level at any time during the research, without giving any reason, until 30 April 2017.

Data will be encrypted and held on password-locked computer files.

How is the project being funded?

The project is being funded indirectly by the UK's Arts and Humanities Research Council since they fund my wider PhD project.

What will happen to the results of the study?

The information I gather during this study may help to influence the framework I develop during my PhD and appear in my final thesis which will be available electronically and in the public domain. Where permission is given, information will also be shared with the museum. I also hope to disseminate research findings in conference papers and peer-reviewed journal articles. You will receive access to these publications as well as a specific publication produced for participants and their community. Participants who take part in interviews will also receive a copy of the interview transcript.

Who should I contact for further information?

If you have any questions or require more information about this study, please contact me using the following contact details:

Laura Gibson
Department of Digital Humanities
King's College London
26-29 Drury Lane, Strand Campus
London WC2B 5RL

Tel: + 44 (0)20 7848 2931

Email: laura.gibson@kcl.ac.uk

Alternatively, please contact the museum at which your community's focus group workshop was held and request through them that I make contact with you. Please provide the museum with your preferred telephone number, email or postal address.

What if I have further questions, or if something goes wrong?

If this study has harmed you in any way or if you wish to make a complaint about the conduct of the study you can contact King's College London using the details below for further advice and information:

Simon Tanner
Department of Digital Humanities
King's College London
26-29 Drury Lane, Strand Campus
London WC2B 5RL

Tel: + 44 (0)20 7848 2931

Email: simon.tanner@kcl.ac.uk

Thank you for reading this information sheet and for considering taking part in this research.

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH STUDIES

Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research.



Title of Study: PhD fieldwork research: Rethinking museum collections in South Africa

King's College Research Ethics Committee Ref: LRS-16/17-3930

Thank you for considering taking part in this research. The person organising the research must explain the project to you before you agree to take part. If you have any questions arising from the Information Sheet or explanation already given to you, please ask the researcher before you decide whether to join in. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.

I confirm that I understand that by ticking/initialling each box I am consenting to this element of the study. I understand that it will be assumed that unticked/initialled boxes mean that I DO NOT consent to that part of the study. I understand that by not giving consent for any one element I may be deemed ineligible for the study.

Please tick or initial

☐

1. *I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet dated [INSERT DATE AND VERSION NUMBER] for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information and asked questions which have been answered satisfactorily.

Please tick or initial

☐

2. *I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any

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reason. Furthermore, I understand that I will be able to withdraw my data up to 30 April 2017.

3. *I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes explained to me. I understand that such information will be handled at least in accordance with the terms of the UK Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) (including the Data Protection Principles) as well as Section 14 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and Protection of Personal Information (POPI) Act (2013).

☐

4. *I understand that my information may be subject to review by responsible individuals from the College for monitoring and audit purposes.

5. Anonymity is optional for this research. Please select from the following 3 options:

☐

a. I agree to be fully identified (i.e agree to be quoted by first name and surname)

b. I agree to be partially identified by: (Please indicate your preference)

☐

First name only ☐ Pseudonym ☐

☐

Number code ☐

c. I wish to remain completely anonymous

☐

6. I agree to be contacted in the future by King's College London researchers who would like to invite me to participate in follow up studies to this project, or in future studies of a similar nature.

☐

7. I consent to my participation being audio recorded.

☐

8. I consent to my participation being visually recorded.

☐

9. I agree to the recording being translated and transcribed by a third-party.

☐

10. I assign copyright for recordings and transcripts to King's College London.

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Name of Witness

Date

Signature

**IPHEPHA LEMININGWANE LABA
HLANGANYELI**

REC Reference Number: LRS-16/17-3930



Uzonikezwa ikhophi laleliphepha mangabe ususiqedile lesivivinyo.

Isihloko sesifundo

Lo ngumsebenzi we PhD cwaningo: Rethinking museum collections in South Africa (ukucabangisisa kahle amaqoqo e Museum yase Mzansi Afrika).

Isigaba sesimemo

Siyakumema ukuthi ube omunye wabantu abayi qembu lale sivivinyo salolu cwaningo esilwenzayo.

Awuphoqelekele ukuthi usenze lesivivinyo, kumele usenze mangabe kuthanda wena.

Ngaphambi kokuthi uphendule lemibuzo, kubalulekile wazi ukuthi lolu cwaningo lwenzelwani, nanokuthi wena kudingakala ukuthi wenzeni.

Sicela ukuthi uthathe isikhathi ufunde lemininingwane elandelayo, bese uxoxa ngayo nose duze kwakho mawuthanda. Mangabe kukhona ongakuqondi, siza usazise ngokushesha.

Iyini inhloso yale sifundo?

Inhloso yale sifundo ukuqonda kahle ubuhlobo obuphakathi kwe museums zase Mzansi Afrika, ne mithombo yomphakathi yazo.

Imithombo yomphakathi ingachazwa njenge ndawo lapho amaqoqo ase museum aqala ukutholakala khona.

Ngenza ucwaningo ngokuthi imiphakathi icabangani ngamaqoqo ezimpahla yama siko azo agcinwe kwama museums.

Ngifisa ukwazi ukuthi umphakathi ufuna ukuthi impahla yama siko azo ithanda ukuthi iphathwe njani, nanokuthi amaselula angasiza njani ekwenzeni amaqoqo ase museums atholakale kalula.

Lesivivinyo sizokwenziwa ngosuku olulodwa, futhi kuzoba namaqembu.

Kungani umenyiwe ukuthi wenze lesivivinyo?

Ngimema abahlanganyeli abangaphezu kweminyaka engu 16 abazibiza ngokuthi ngamalungu yomthombo omphakathi. Lempahla engiyiphethe, kwisikhathi esidlule yayi bizwa ngokuthi yi Natal Nguni. I South African Museum e Cape Town, isayibiza ngalokhu, futhi ingenye yamaqoqo ase Iziko Museum of South Africa Social History Collections.

Kumele ngisenze lesivivinyo?

Cha. Akuphokelekile. OKumele ukwenze ukuthi ufunde iphepha eline mininingwane, mangabe unemibuzo kuzo mele ubuze mina noma ubuze lo ongiphethe. Mangabe, kune mibuzo onayo engaphenduleki kakhle, une lungelo loku nqaba ukuqhubeka nale sivivinyo.

Kuzo kwenzekalani uma ngenza lesivivinyo?

Mangabe uvuma ukwenza lesivivinyo, uzonikezwa leliphepha elinemininingwane, bese ucelwe ukuthi usayine ifomu lemvume.

Lezingxoxo kunye nezivivinyo zizobe zi nezihloko ezahlukenene. Konke lokhu kuzokwenziwa ngendlela efzekisa izidingo zakho. Lezi ngxoxo zizo rhekhodwa, mangabe nisinikeza imvume, kuzobakhona nomuntu ozosiza ngokutolika. Uzocelwa ukuthi usayine ifomu lemvume yase King's College London. Lokho ke kusho ukuthi I King's College Lodon, uyinikeza imvume yokuthi inga sebenzisa lemininingwane oyinekeza yona noma yikuphi lapho edingeka khona, futhi nomphakathi uzokwazi ukuwathola. Mangabe ungavumelani nalokhu, kumele ungayi sayini le fomu.

Eyamaholo

Angeke uze ukhokhelwe ngokwenza lesi sivivinyo. Kodwa uzonikezwa imali yokugibela, kane futhi kuzobane ziphuzo.

Ingaba kukhona ubu ngozi noma izinto engingazizuza mangenza lesi sivivinyo?

Akuna bungozi ekwenzeni lesi sivivinyo. Into eyodwa edingakala kuwena, isikhathi sakho nje kuphela. Kune mibuzo ongayithola kunzima ukuyiphendula, mangaba kwenzeka lokhu, ungawu dlula lowo mbuzo, noma ungaqhubeki nesivivinyo.

Mangivuma ukwenza lesi sivivinyo, ningalifihla igama lami manginga funi livezwe?

Ukufihlakala kwe gama lakho, uyazikhethela. Lama fomu akunikeza izindlela ezintathu zokuzivikela.

- A) Ungasebenzisa igama nesibongo sakho.
- B) Ungasebenzisa igama kuphela.
- C) Okokugcina, ungasebenzisa inombolo oyinikeziwe kuphela.

Uyakwazi ukushintsha igama olibhalile kwi fomu yakho ngaphambi komhla ka 30 April 2017.

Kuzo kwenzakalani ngemiphumela yalolu cwaningo?

Lemininingwane, yalolu cwaningo izovela kweminye yemsebenzi yami ye PhD, ezotholakala kwa makhompyutha. Maninginikeza imvume, lemininingwane ngizoyisa e museum.

Ngubani OKumele ngi qhaqhamishelane naye mangifuna eminye iminingwane malunga nalolu cwaningo?

Ngitholakala kulezi nombolo:

Laura Gibson
Department of Digital Humanities
King's College London
26-29 Drury Lane, Strand Campus
London WC2B 5RL
Tel: + 44 (0)20 7848 2931
Email: laura.gibson@kcl.ac.uk

Noma uqhaqhamishelane ne museum lapho iqembu lakho beli vivinywa khona. Lapho ke, ungashiya izinombolo zakho ze selula, idilesi ye email yakho, noma idilesi yalapho othola khona izincwadi zakho.

Ngenze njani mengabe kuneminye imibuzo enginayo, noma kukhona OKunga hambi kahle?

Mawufuna ukukhononda ngendlela lolu cwaningo olwenziwe ngayo, unga qhaqhamishelana ne King's College London, nazi izinombolo zabo:

Simon Tanner

Department of Digital Humanities

King's College London

26-29 Drury Lane, Strand Campus

London WC2B 5RL

Tel: + 44 (0)20 7848 2931

Email: simon.tanner@kcl.ac.uk

Ngiyabonga ngosizo lwakho, nokuthi ubengumunye wabantu abazinikeze isikhathi sokuthi benze lolu cwaningo.

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH STUDIES

Siza usayine leli fomu mangabe usuqedile ukufunda ifomu lemininingwane



Isihloko sesifundo: PhD fieldwork research: Rethinking museum collections in South Africa

King's College Research Ethics Committee Ref: LRS-16/17-3930

Siyabonga ngoku zipha isikhathi sokuthi ubengomunye wabantu abasiza ngalolu cwaningo.

Lomuntu ohlanginisa lolu cwaningo kumele achaze ukuthi lolu cwaningo lungani ngaphambi kokuthi uvume ukwenza isivivinyo. Umangaba unemibuzo onayo eqondane ne fomu lemininingwane, noma kukhona into esichaziwe ongayizwa kakhle, siza ubuze umcwaningi, ngaphambi kokuthi wenze isinqumo sokwenza lesi sivivinyo.

Uzonikezwa ikhophi lale fomu ukuthi uligcine hleze uludinga ekuhambeni kwesikhathi.

Konke OKu bhalwe kule fomu, ngiyavumelana nakho, makunjalo bhala u X kwi bhokisi elingase sandleni sokudla. I bhokisi elingenaye u X lisho ukuthi awufuni ukwenza lolu cwaningo.

☐

1. *Ngiyavuma ukuthi ngili fundile ifomu lemininingwane [09/12/2016] lwalesifundo. Nginikeziwe isikhathi sokuthi ngi buze imibuzo lapho engingaqondi khona.

☐

2. *Ngiyavuma ukhuthi ukubayingxenye yalolu cwaningo, kuyisifiso sami, futhi ngingakwazi ukuthi ngishintshe umqondo ngaphambi kwe 30 April 2017.

☐

3. *Ngiyavuma ukuthi imininingwane yami ingasetshenziwa ngedlela i UK Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) (Including Data Principles) esebenzisa ngayo imininingwane yabantu; ngiyavuma futhi ukuthi knonke lokhu ku hlangene no Section 14 ye Constitution of the Republic of South Africa kunye ne Republic of

☐

South Africa and Protection of Personal information (POPI) Act 2013.

4. *Nginyaqonda ukuthi lemininingwane engiyinikezile inga bhekwa ngabanye abantu abavivinyayo e King's College London.

☐

5. Ano Zintathu indlela zokuzi chaza ukuthi uwubani:

a. **Ngiyavuma kuthi igama nesibongo sami sitshenziswe.**

☐

b. **I Ngiyavuma ukuthi kusetshenziswe igama lami, khetha indlela ofuna ukuvezwa ngayo.**

☐

Igama kuphela ☐ gama lokuzakhela ☐

Inombolo engiyinikeziwe ☐

c. **Angifuni ukuthi igama lami livezwe**

☐

6. Ngiyavuma ukuthi abacwaningi base King's College London banga qhaqhamishelana nami esikhathini esizayo, ukusiza futhi kolunye ucwaningo olulandela lokhu.

☐

7. Ngiyavuma ukuthi isivivinyo sami singa rekhodwa.

☐

8. Ngiyavuma ukuthi isivivinyo sami si vezwe kwama video.

☐

9. Ngiyayinika imvume yokuthi lengxoxo ihumushwe umhumishi ozimele

☐

10. Ngi nikeza I King's College London i-copyright yako konke OKu rekhodiwe.

☐

Igama lakho

Date

Sayina

Igama lofakazi

Date

Sayina

Appendix 5: Workshop Results Publications: Objects, Cultures

Appendix 5.1. Luthuli Museum, Groutville, Publication





Images:

Luthuli Museum and
Laura Kate Gibson

Original materials:

Iziko Museums of Cape Town

A message to all who took part:

On Friday 9 December 2016, you gathered at the Luthuli Museum with other community members from the Groutville area. Through a series of activities and discussions, your group of 22 participants spent time exploring ideas about their material culture and identities. Your group comprised a rich mix of artists, entrepreneurs, writers, poets, designers, educators, musicians, hip-hop fans, chess players and students. Our big, over-arching question for the day was, *"how can we make museum collections more relevant, representative and accessible to the communities from which they are collected?"*

You first received pictures of six items originally collected by the South African Museum (SAM) in Cape Town during the colonial and apartheid eras. These items were all classified as "Natal Nguni" and "Zulu" by the Museum. Some of the items were more recognisable to your group than others. Today these items form part of the Iziko Museums of South Africa's Social History collections. We spent time identifying the items, sharing information and stories about them, deciding how we would present them to communities less familiar with Zulu culture and then comparing these results with the information held in the museum catalogue cards. It became clear that your community's knowledge and curiosity could enrich these records and the stories they subsequently tell.

The items historically collected by the SAM were considered representations of Zulu culture and objects widely used by this group. In these days, it was the SAM staff and curators who made these decisions, determined how the items would be classified and what information would be captured in the museum records. The records they produced primarily met the Museum's needs and were written in English.

After lunch, our focus switched to thinking about items used today in Zulu communities. Your group shared examples of items you use frequently that mean something to you. Cell phones, laptops, an umbrella, a special belt, keys, a treasured bracelet and diaries all featured. What they demonstrate is the dynamic nature of the community and how integrated it is in a modern, global material culture, something the SAM collection intentionally denied.

Finally, your group answered the question, "what would you put in an exhibition about your culture and community?" Responses included *isicholo*, *izimbadada* and *imfuyo*. As the day proved, it's a question worth repeating.

I am exceptionally grateful to all of you for giving up your time and for contributing so enthusiastically during the day. The Luthuli Museum was the perfect venue for this event and I am thankful to the staff who assisted with so many of the arrangements. Thank you to the Iziko Museums of South Africa, particularly Lailah Hisham and Gerald Klinghardt, for providing access to the collection and helping me with my many requests. The results from the day will be an extremely valuable contribution to my PhD research on democratising knowledge. To all of you who made this possible, *Ngiyabonga kakhulu!*

Laura Kate Gibson

"Kuyini loku, futhi uthini umlando wakho?"

What's this and what's its story?

The six items shown to your group were collected in the colonial and apartheid eras from the area now known as KwaZulu-Natal. The South African Museum classified them as "Natal Nguni" objects. Museum curators recorded information about these items on catalogue cards shown here. While this information became accepted as authoritative, we should remember that it captures just one version of the item's story. Moreover, this story reflected and reinforced the harsh inequalities and injustices of colonialism and apartheid.

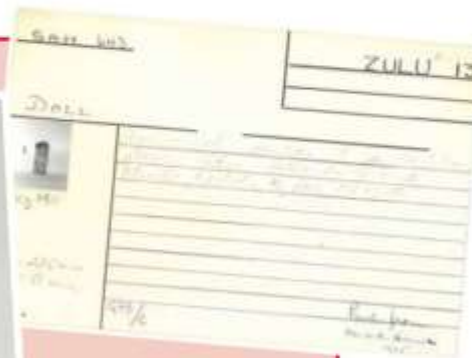
What is missing from most of the museum records is the other stories, particularly those of the people and their descendants who made and used these items, the source community. Our subsequent discussions were an opportunity to hear your thoughts about these items, what information you would record about them and how you would record this information as part of the source community. This is merely a short summary selection of your many excellent contributions.



What you say: "It's wrong to call this a clay pot. This is ukhamba, a t... pot. Nowadays there are plas... of this produced in China and... but they're not the same. Ukh... in ancestral shrines kept in th... Zulu homes and sometimes b... Left overnight, our ancestors... drink from it. Our ancestors n... it before anyone else does. Tr... only men drink from it. Some... drunk from the ukhamba. Thi... example of ukhamba."



What you say: "This item is creepy. It might have something to do with witchcraft. We haven't seen something like it before but that might be because it isn't meant to be seen. It isn't a normal Zulu doll. Zulu dolls made at the same time that this one was collected [1905] are already more similar to those we see today."

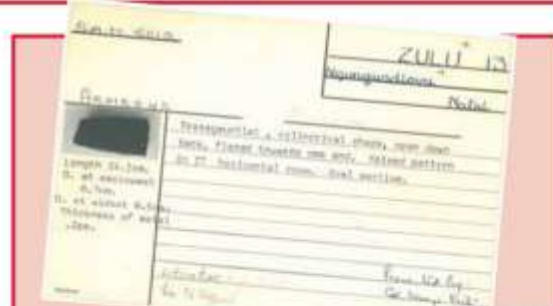




What you say: "We're not all in agreement but most of us identify this as an igege, a belt worn by women purely for decorative purposes. It's made with a type of grass called ingongoni found near rivers in KZN."

call this just a traditional beer
tic versions
sold here
amba is used
e corner of
uilt outside
will come and
must drink from
aditionally,
of us have
s is a beautiful

What the SAM sources say:
"Ingxotha were given by the king to distinguished persons, men or women, as a sort of decoration...The armlet was worn on the right forearm on ceremonial occasions, only. It was made to the king's order, and bought from the maker for an ox. Another ox had to be paid to the king. A skin pad was worn underneath, but even so it was said to be most painful to wear and some accounts state that a gourd of water was kept to pour over it from time to time."



What you say: "These aren't familiar. Perhaps they're very old. The card says they were found at Ngungundlovu but there's no such place. They must mean uMgungundlovu [Capital of Zulu kingdom during Dingane's reign 1785 - 1840]."



What you say: "We haven't seen anything like this before. Maybe it's a musical instrument. Maybe our grandmothers would recognise it. We doubt it's actually Zulu."



What you say: "Yes, this is a basket for harvesting grain. Some of us still have them in our homes but they aren't really used any more for this. It was the women who used to use them."



Thully, Nothando, Ntsikelelo and Lungile's umbrellas protect them from the sun and, sometimes, the rain.



Lindiwe (right) received her hat as a gift and uses it to protect her hair and face from the sun. Xolani (left) selected his diary as his item.



Nombuso's wallet is important because this is where she stores her cards and money.



Lungani also presented his watch as his significant item.



Dumisile and several other group members selected their diaries and notebooks as their significant item. You use them in various ways: to keep contact details and to write reminders; as a "dear" diary to record personal details about your life and how you live it; and Xolani, Chair of the Luthuli Museum chess club, uses his diary to record times and dates of club meetings.



Bongeka was one of three participants who selected their laptop as their important item. Your group uses them to both store and produce music and also to write and edit pieces using software kept on the computer.

"Yini esikhwameni sakho?"

What's in your bag?

You shared three items with your partner that you normally carry with you and that are important to you. Your partner then shared one of these items with the rest of the group. Some had practical uses and some held sentimental value, such as one member's bracelet inscribed with the words Rise Young Women's Club and given to her by an "awesome woman." Many of the items are made and found elsewhere in the world but you've adapted them and use them to suit your needs, making them part of your material culture in a twenty-first century Zulu community. This is a selection of the items you chose. Other items not featured here include Zambok, a ring, cigarettes and matches, a lipstick and jersey.



Leon and Nkosikhona consider their house keys extremely important because they allow them to access their home while also locking it to protect it from thieves.

Menzi was one of several group members who identified money as the most important item they carry. You need it to do the simplest things, like paying the taxi fare to pick up your children. Menzi's other item is a crocodile skin belt he bought while visiting the UK with his friends. The belt makes him feel very special when he wears it. He also saw US President Barack Obama in the same store where he bought it.



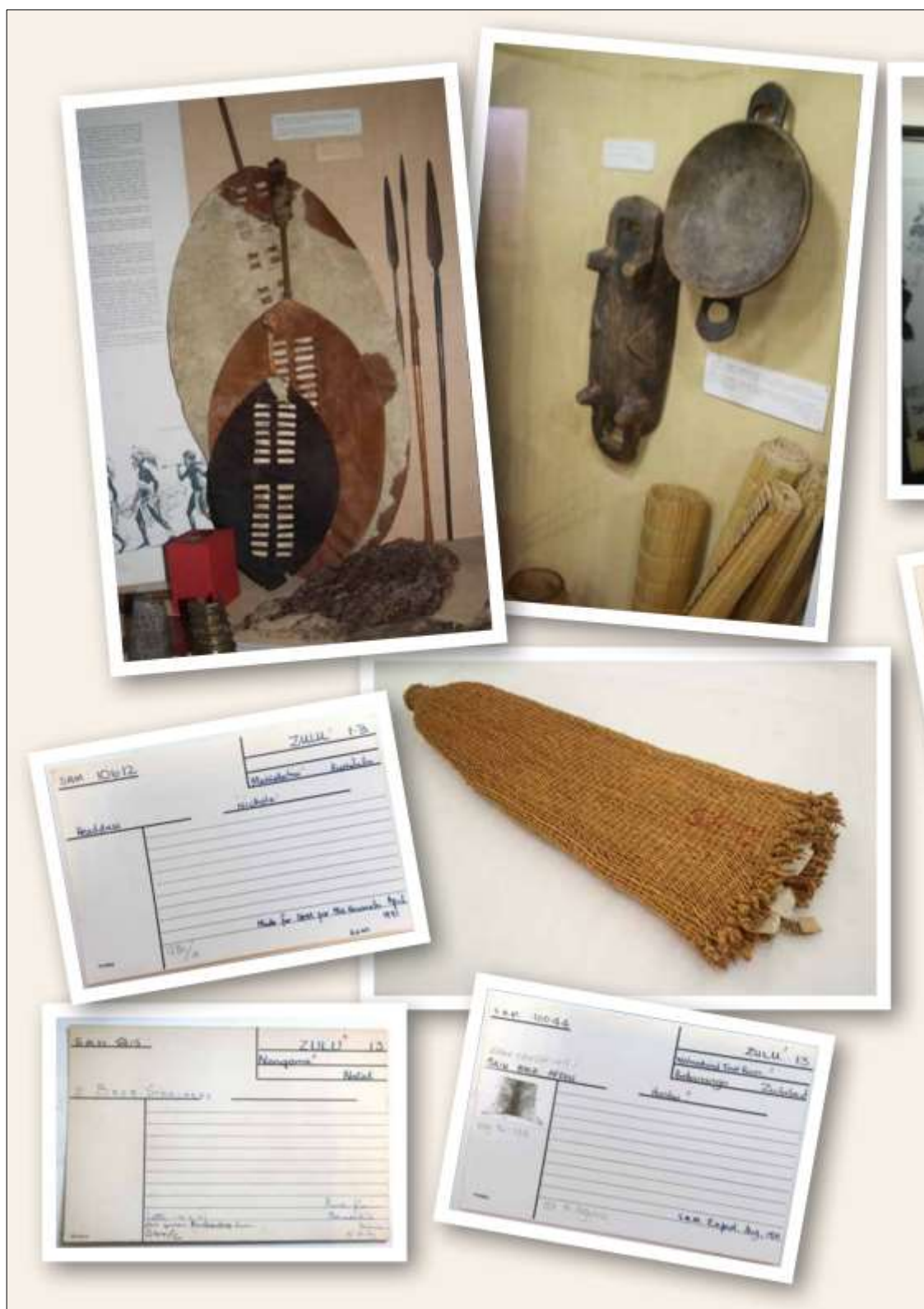
Siyabonga's ID document means he can always identify himself. His other item, a Hermès watch, holds more sentimental value. A gift from his father who owned it for 17 years, it is now broken but was given to him when his father passed. He describes it as being made of "pure gold."

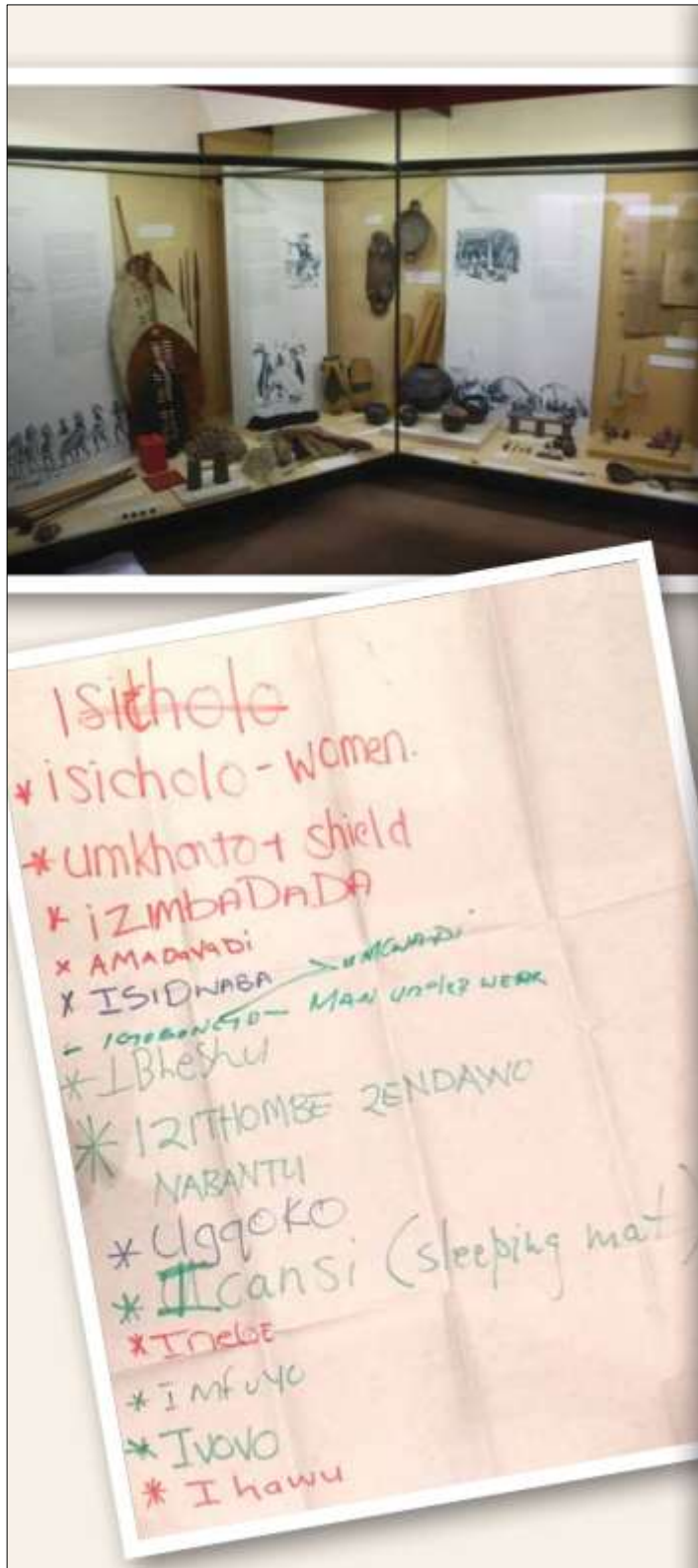


Boyzie, Mr Ndaba and Sifiso were not alone in choosing their cell phones as the most important material item they carry with them every day. As well as using it for communication many of you use it mainly for storing documentation, photos and videos. One group member uses it to keep pictures of their "lovely kids," another stores their music on the phone and one of you uses it to keep appointment reminders.



Zandile's earphones were made in Japan. Music is her passion and these allow her to listen to it wherever she is. She explains that music changes and uplifts her mood.





"Imyuziyemu Yenu"

Your Museum

The final question you answered was, "is there anything else we haven't seen today that you'd include in a museum exhibition about your community and your culture?" These are the items you'd also like to include. Iziko Museums holds examples of some, not all, of these in their Social History collections.

- Isicolo
- Umkhonto
- Izimbada
- Amadavadi
- Isidwaba
- Umcwadi
- Igobongo
- Ibheshu
- Izithombe zendawo nabantu
- Uggoko
- Icansi
- Inebe
- Imfuyo
- Ivovo
- Ihawu
- Isinene
- Izigqizi
- Ishoba
- Isikhwile
- Umqhele

Also in the Iziko Museums of South Africa Social History collections

The old South African Museum collected nearly one thousand items that it classified as "Natal Nguni" and "Zulu." Most are now housed in the new Iziko Social History centre located close to Parliament and the Company Gardens in Cape Town. They are stored in secure, climate controlled rooms. This is a small selection of these items.





*Keep
the conversation
alive.*

Keep in touch:
laura.gibson@kcl.ac.uk

Contributors

Bongeka Tshingana

Boyzie Myeni

Cebdie Nkosi Xulu

Cebile Dindi

Clifford Ndaba

Dumusile Luthuli

Lindiwe Nyembe

Lungile Dlamini

Lungsani Maqhakane

Meluzi Zulu

Menzi Mthethwa

Nkosikhona Sibisi

Nobuso Dind

Nothando Dindi

Ntsikelelo Dindi

Sifiso Xaba

Siyabonga Mzobe

Thandekile Luthuli

Thully

Xolani Myeni

Zandile Manzini

Leon Nxumalo

Special thanks to the
Luthuli Museum and staff for assisting with and
hosting the event.

OBJECTS, CULTURES AND STORIES IN MUSEUMS



The Vukani Museum, 3 February 2017



Images: Laura Kate Gibson
Original materials: Shilo Museums of South Africa



ABOUT LAURA KATE GIBSON

Originally from the UK, I first moved to South Africa in 2005 to study for an MPhil in African Studies at the University of Cape Town. My current PhD research builds on this and my Bachelor with Honours degree in History from the University of Durham, UK, as well as postgraduate courses in Museum Studies at the University of Toronto, Canada. I have since been very fortunate to work at some fascinating museums, including the Lutful Museum in Grouville, KwaZulu-Natal, and the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., USA, where I was a Research Fellow in 2015. South Africa has always made me feel very welcome and I am delighted that this research means another opportunity to spend time here.

A MESSAGE TO ALL PARTICIPANTS

On Friday 3 February 2017,

you gathered at the Vukosi Museum with two staff members and five other community members from the Tloane area. For me, the day was a wonderful opportunity to get to know you and to explore ideas about Zulu material culture, heritage and identity as names, traditions, rituals, lifeways, grandparents, granddaughters, brothers and sisters, you brought with you a wealth of knowledge and experience. Our tag-over-acting question for the day was, "How can we make museum collections more relevant, representative and accessible to the communities from which they are collected?"

You first received pictures

of six items originally collected by the South African Museum (SAM) in Cape Town during the colonial and apartheid eras. These items were all classified as "lost objects" and "Zulu" by the Museum. Some of the items were more recognisable to your group than others. Today these items form part of the Tloane Museums of South Africa's Social History collections. We spent time identifying the items, sharing information and stories about them, deciding how we would present them to communities less familiar with Zulu culture and then comparing these results with the information held in the museum catalogue cards. It became clear that your community's knowledge and capacity could enrich these records and the stories they subsequently tell.

The items, historically collected by the SAM, were considered representations of Zulu culture and objects widely used by this group. You pointed out that some of the items are also used by other groups and communities in Africa that do not self-identify as Zulu. In the past, it was the SAM staff and curators who made decisions about what to collect, determined how the items would be classified and what information would be captured in

the museum records. The records they produced primarily met the Museum's needs and were written in English.

After lunch, our focus switched to thinking about items used today in Zulu communities. Your group shared examples of items you use frequently that mean something to you: Cell phones, a pen, a diary, bags, a rooster, cattle and traditional clothing all featured. What they demonstrate is the dynamic nature of the community and how integrated it is in a modern, global material culture, something few SAM collection dated.

Finally, your group answered the question,

"What would you put in an exhibition about your culture and community?" Responses included ngqubo, ndaba and a song. You also mentioned better documentation and preserving such knowledge on the Internet (highly paraded as ancient song) but caution that this kind of information isn't appropriate for everyone to access at a museum.

I am truly grateful to all of you

for giving up your time and for contributing so enthusiastically during the day. The Vukosi Museum was a beautiful location for the event and the staff were generous hosts throughout the preparations and on the day. The results from the activities will be an extremely valuable contribution to my PhD research on democratising knowledge. To all of you who made this possible, Ngqobongwe Kothulu!

Laura Kate Gibson

"KUYINI LOKU, FUTHI UTHINI UMLANDO WAKHO?" WHAT'S THIS AND WHAT'S ITS STORY?

The items shown to your group were collected in the eastern and central areas from the area now known as KwaZulu-Natal. The South African Museum classified them as "Natal Nguni" objects. Museum curators recorded information about these items on catalogue cards shown here. While this information became accepted as authoritative, we should remember that it captures just one version of the item's story. Moreover, the story reflected and reinforced the harsh inequalities and injustices of colonialism and apartheid.

What is missing from most of the museum records is the other stories, particularly those of the people and their descendants who made and used these items, the source community. Our subsequent discussions were an opportunity to hear your thoughts about these items, what information you would record about them and how you would record this information as part of the source community. This is merely a short summary selection of your many excellent contributions.



BELT

WHAT YOU SAY:

When you say "This could be a belt worn by married women after giving birth to assist with returning the woman's figure, not always on display" it is worn until the baby is weaned. The colours are specific to married women. It is made from woven incense."



BASKET

WHAT YOU SAY:

"We used it to store paprika, blooms and all other dried legumes and kept them in the kitchen. Made of upingo, these baskets are available. The grass is first played to make a rope which is then woven into circles that taper towards the base."



PUZZLE

WHAT YOU SAY:

"This isn't Zulu if we have to guess, we think it could be a hunting tool used by the Abathwa people, or a singahot, or something, used by the Chirane in martial arts, or perhaps a tool used by people driving doctory cars to scare the animals into action."



BEER SKIMMER

WHAT YOU SAY:

"This is skhetho, it is used to skim impurities from the surface of home-made beer before drinking it. We use it to make it. These days it is not easy to collect kula grasses. Although, the skhetho plays a very important role in beer preparation and drinking ceremonies, unlike the skhetho it can be moved from one place to another, including this museum. It is generally women who make these items but there are also some very talented men making skhetho. Beer ceremonies are still very important and we perform them when our children go to university or overseas for good luck and protection."



CLUB

WHAT YOU SAY:

"We know this as iwisa, a ceremonial item carried by respectable men and African kings. Drogone always carried iwisa in his right hand. The brass ring shows that it is ceremonial as does its polished finish. Without this it could be iwisa that is used when hunting. They're made from the amamela tree which is very strong and is now a protected species. Nowadays, men and women, such as praise singers and artists, carry the item to denote status."



POT

WHAT YOU SAY:

"This is ukhamba, a pot for holding liquids like home brew and water, or preparing amasi. It must be made of clay which means it is fragile. We women have experience making these. We know how to collect the specific clay from the riverbank, how to roll out the clay and remove the bubbles, about gathering the grass for the fire to dry it, about how to strengthen its colour. When the ukhamba is ready, it makes a particular noise when struck. This test knowledge we learnt from books at school but from our mothers, grandmothers, mothers-in-law it's the men of the house who then use ukhamba."

There's a smaller version of ukhamba called umamulwana, or 'snuggly'. It's used in ancestral celebrations, it kept in a special place in the house and must never be given to outsiders."

"YINI ESIKHWAMENI SAKHO?" WHAT'S IN YOUR BAG?

You shared three items with your partner that you normally carry with you and that are important to you. Some of the items have practical purposes while others hold sentimental or religious value. The items you chose were a mixture of globally available items, such as cell phones, and items you identify as more specifically Zulu.



Sabolo Mubande



Cebile Mkhatha



Ayanda Khulu

CELL PHONE:

Besides his, every participant chose the item. Your reasons for doing so varied. Sizwe, the youngest participant, uses his to track time and to keep connected with people, primarily through WhatsApp text messages and calls. Ayanda doesn't explicitly specify why he values his cell phone but from observing your group of day, I can see that he receives numerous phone calls. Cebile likewise regards her cell phone as important because it means people can get hold of her. Khulu also considers her phone a way of staying connected with the outside world but her immediate concern is that her phone informs her if people are stealing her money. Secondly, she states that she used her phone to gather information. Thando also uses her phone for banking and communicating with people, particularly her daughter who lives in Germany and with whom she regularly Skypes. Additionally, her phone is her navigation device. Sabolo always carries two cell phones with him: one for receiving information and one for giving it. He uses his MTN networked phone for the former and Vodacom connected phone for the latter on which he calls and messages his children and grandchildren.

WALLET:

Ayanda's reasoning for choosing a wallet is similar to Khulu (and Cebile's reasons for selecting the bag) as a container for storing his license and ID.

DIARY:

Sizwe uses the item to record important appointments and other information. It is his work release document.



Mrs Xulu

BAG:

Nani's bag is seventeen years old and made of "zulu leather". It goes everywhere with her and she agrees that it is a useful tool. It would have interesting stories to tell. Cebile also cites her bag but for its usefulness as a container, rather than its sentimental or material qualities. It contains everything she needs and she states that if she ever changes bags, when she goes out, it ends up going over her "headache" because she's inevitably left something she needs in this bag. Khosi appreciates her bag for its unusual design which first attracted her to it. Liso Cebile, who uses it to hold all her personal belongings, specifically her ID, bank card and cosmetics.

EYE GLASSES:

Diabetes has affected Nani's eyesight over the years. She needs her glasses to read more easily.

ROMAN CATHOLIC ROSARY:

This is Nani's first choice. She is a Christian and she serves as a reminder of her faith. She says that it offers her psychological protection.

PEN:

Chosen by Siso for its sentimental value rather than its practical use, this pen was given to him by an ex-student during his school-teaching days.

XANGOE:

This product is derived from mangos and is used to treat scurvy, diabetes, hypertension and a host of other maladies. Thandi sells this and so always carries samples of it with her.

CLOTHING:

Cebile received her African style top from her sister. When she wears it she feels "on top of the world." For her, it is more special on account of being a gift. Ayanda also chooses a special item that he wears when he needs to feel special or strong. This was also given to him as a gift by a very good friend and it is his favour, rather than the item's style (short sleeves) or pattern that give it value for Ayanda for Khosi. The traditional Zulu attire she is wearing (top, skirt and scarf) is very special for its cultural value. The skirt is a modern day substitute for the traditional cow skirt that it is so heavy to wear. Thandi also places great value on the Ndebele outfit she wears today. It was bought for her by her sister for her to wear when attending her daughter's wedding in Harare.

The intention was that the outfit works as a powerful reminder of their culture. The bright colour of the blouse means Thandi stands out in a crowd, consciously drawing attention to this difference. Her skirt/apron legole indicates how many children she has. Sabelo, although he is not wearing it today, chooses the Basutu as one of his items. This is the traditional Zulu male apron. Sabelo states that he chooses this because he loves traditional Zulu attire. One of his other items is his Umkhonto (spear). He says that if someone comes into his house and is anything other than friendly to him, Sabelo merely looks at his Umkhonto hanging on the wall and the other person stops talking!



Thandi Nsumalo



Khosi Shange

"IMYUZIYEMU YENU" YOUR MUSEUM

WHAT YOU WANT TO SEE

During the day we also spoke about other categories that you think should be included on museum totebag cards so that they capture some of the information you consider important about the items. You agreed that you'd also like to know the following information about museum items. At the moment, this information is either not known by the museum, because it was never collected or forgotten, or it is not easily accessible on the cards.

• Who makes the item?

By this you mean men or women and you say that this is sometimes more important than knowing the identity of the individual producing the item. At present, this information is not on the cards.

• The area where the item is made. In the current cards, the area where the item was collected frequently appears but rarely the area in which it was made.

• Item's **measurements**. This is not simply for storage reasons but because the size of the item can often reveal its use. For example, the small size of utensils would indicate that it was used by the host or could be an ornament.

• Material from which item is made, including the process of making it.

• Why used the item?

• The item's **purpose(s)** as determined by the source community.

• Item's **zulu name**.



THE FINAL QUESTION

The final question you answered was, "Is there anything else we haven't seen today that you'd include in a museum exhibition about your community and your culture?" The things you choose are not simply tangible objects that could be displayed in a glass museum case. They are instead examples of living, intangible cultural heritage that must be performed without being encased. Only one of the items that you list -- the drums -- is actually included in the Ibibio collection. You also point out that there are some cultural items that are highly valued by your communities that should not be stored in a museum for everyone and anyone to access.

- **Igigidi** (African drums): Used at traditional ceremonies, you emphasize that these must be played and heard to be appreciated.
- **Sargasa**: These tassels play an important role in your culture.
- **Ibibio** and **ahyama** (traditional dances): Again, these must be performed.
- **Igbene** (traditional song): You tell us that families have Igbene that is passed down from generation to generation. It is guarded by the family and only certain people are allowed to hear it. You say that you would like people to be better at documenting this sort of knowledge so that it can be preserved but it must be your cultural communities who do the documenting. Igbene cannot be displayed publicly in a museum for anyone to hear.

(The other items shown here are those we highlighted during our conversations and which are included in the Ibibio collection.)



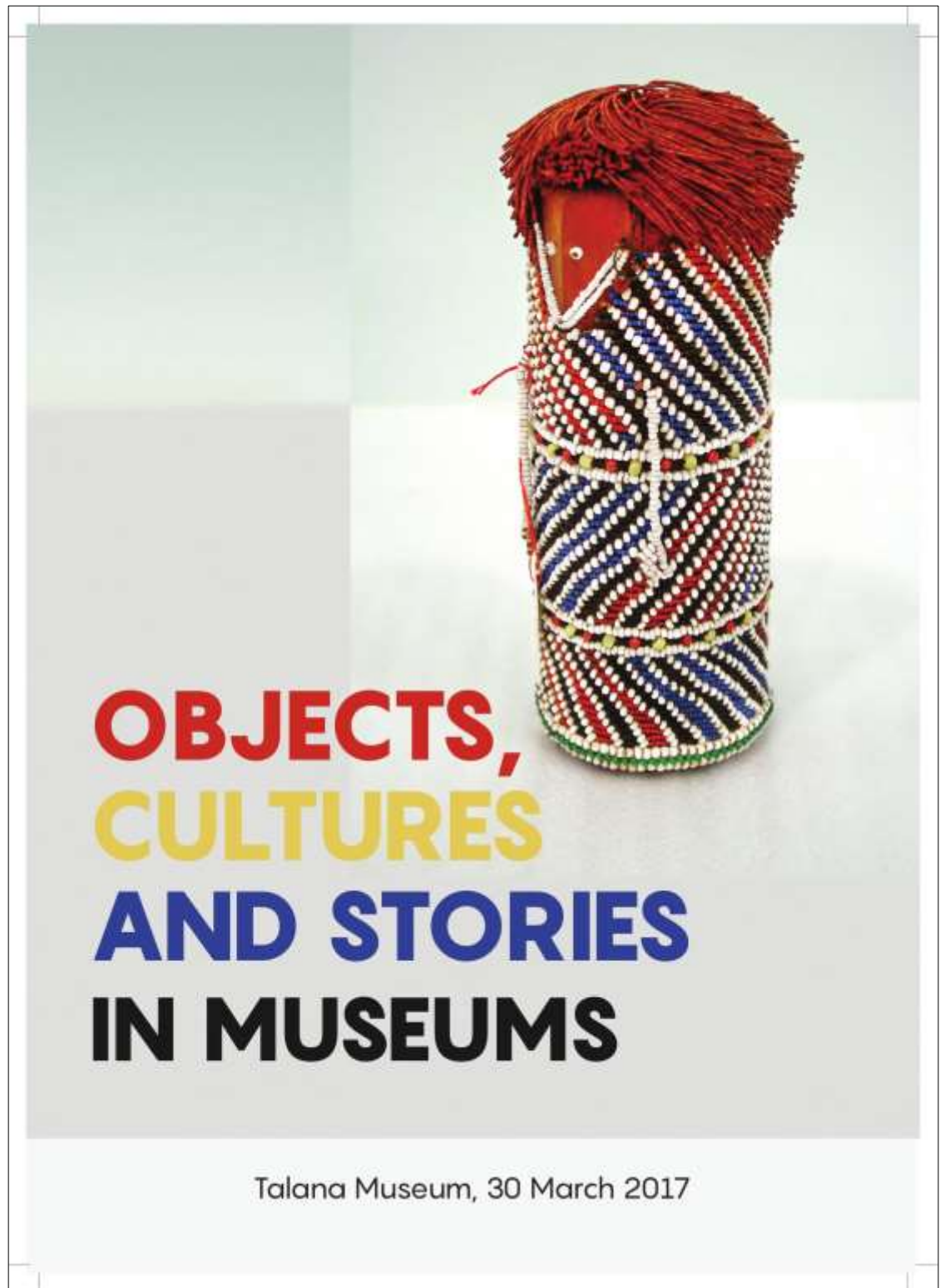


CONTRIBUTORS

Sabelo Nkabinde · Nini Xulu · Ayanda Ntuli · Cebisile Mbatha · Thandi Nxumalo · Khosi Shange

Special thanks to Zama Mbatha, Sizwe Mgwaba and Vivienne Garside at the Vukani Museum for assisting with and hosting the event.
Written and Published by Laura Kate Glason, 2017. Design by Salma Price-Neil of thesalsacreative.com.





OBJECTS, CULTURES AND STORIES IN MUSEUMS

Talana Museum, 30 March 2017



Published in 2017. Original materials: Iziko Museums of South Africa
Images: Laura Kate Gibson



ABOUT LAURA KATE GIBSON

Originally from the UK, I first moved to South Africa in 2005 to study for an MPhil in African Studies at the University of Cape Town. My current PhD research builds on this and my Bachelor with Honours degree in History from the University of Durham, UK, as well as postgraduate courses in Museum Studies at the University of Toronto, Canada. I have since been very fortunate to work at some fascinating museums, including the Luthuli Museum in Groutville, KwaZulu-Natal, and the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., USA, where I was a Research Fellow in 2015. South Africa has always made me feel very welcome and I am delighted that this research means another opportunity to spend time here.

A MESSAGE TO ALL WHO TOOK PART

On Thursday 30 March 2017,

you gathered at the Talana Museum with other colleagues and community members from the Dundee, Vryheid and Newcastle area. Through a series of activities and discussions, your group of 16 participants spent time exploring ideas about their material culture and identities. Your group comprised people from a rich variety of backgrounds and places but you are all actively involved in the KwaZulu-Natal heritage and tourism sectors. Our over-arching question for the day was, "how can we make museum collections more relevant, representative and accessible to the communities from which they are collected?"

You first received pictures

of five items originally collected by the South African Museum (SAM) in Cape Town during the colonial and apartheid eras. These items were all classified as "Natal Nguni" and "Zulu" by the Museum. Some of the items were more recognisable to your group than others. Today these items form part of the Iziko Museums of South Africa's Social History collections. We spent time identifying the items, sharing information and stories about them, and deciding how we would best present them to communities less familiar with Zulu culture. It became clear that your knowledge and curiosity could enrich these records and the stories they subsequently tell.

The items historically collected

by the SAM were considered representations of Zulu culture and objects widely used by this group. In these days, it was the SAM staff and curators who made these decisions,

determined how the items would be classified and what information would be captured in the museum records. The records they produced primarily met the Museum's needs and were written in English.

After lunch, our focus switched to thinking about items used today in your communities. Your group shared examples of items you use frequently that mean something to you. Cell phones, wallets, a wedding ring, a special wallet, keys, tourist brochures and lipstick all featured. What they demonstrate is the dynamic nature of our communities and how integrated they are in a modern, global material culture, something the SAM collection intentionally denied. This led us to consider what words you would use to describe your community. Your various answers included "educated," "diverse," "battlefields," "Zulu," and "mining." Finally, your group answered the question, "what would you put in an exhibition about your culture and community?"

I am exceptionally grateful to all of you

for giving up your time and for contributing so enthusiastically during the day. The Talana Museum was an excellent venue for this event and I am thankful to Pam McFadden who made this possible. The results from the day will be an extremely valuable contribution to my PhD research on democratising knowledge. To all of you who made this possible, *Ngiyabonga kakhulu!*

Laura Kate Gibson

MEDICINE CONTAINER

WHAT YOU SAY:

"This is *igula*. It looks like the container (*izinyanga* (traditional healers) would use to store their powdered medicines. The beads would hold particular meanings for the *inyanga*, for example they can tell them what is inside. In the past, we often used beads to communicate but, like any language, you must first understand the codes to interpret it. The medicine that is/was inside might be very dangerous and have a spiritual connection as well."



STICK

WHAT YOU SAY:

"We don't have a Zulu name for this but we believe it is something carried by sangomas or *izinyanga*. Some of us believe this is not Zulu because that decoration is all made out of wiring and in the old Zulu culture there was no wiring; people were using grass. Others of us think it could be Zulu because the British were fighting a lot in Southern Africa and putting in telegraph lines everywhere. They put in a telegraph line between Dundee and the Buffalo River. Within a week it was stolen. So they were using what they found lying in the velds. And a telegraph wire is lovely piece of strong grass lying in the veld. If it really was found at Isandlwana, we believe it was carried by a poet because you cannot fight with this thing."

POT

WHAT YOU SAY:

"This defines the Zulu. Whenever I see this item I feel like I am a Zulu. But all the Ngunis use this. The item, this beer pot, is known as *ukhamba*. A small *ukhamba* is called *umancishana* and is used only by the head of the household but the larger sizes, like *udiwa* and *imbiza* are passed around by all to drink from. It's so important because it teaches us to share. It also demonstrates our artistry, although this one is poor quality. They are selling plastic versions of these in the spaza shops today, modern plastic ones that are actually thin plastic, but even these mass produced versions maintain the shape because the shape has real significance. When this item is not plastic, even if it is broken, it still plays a very important role because the pieces are used for eating with, for burning incense in."



SNUFF SPOON

WHAT YOU SAY:

"We think we can call this *intshengula*. It's for Zulu men, for taking snuff. It looks like it might be made of the earliest form of plastic: cow horn. This spoon is sometimes carried behind the user's ear, or in their hair."



“YINI ESIKHWAMENI SAKHO?” WHAT’S IN YOUR BAG?

You shared three items with your partner that you normally carry with you and that are important to you. Some of the items have practical purposes while others hold sentimental value. Many of the items you chose are globally available but you have adapted them to meet you specific, more local needs.



Absai Mfengo



Mpilo Dlamini



Louis Eksteen



Sandra Williams

MONEY:

Absai selected money as his most important item because “you can’t do anything without it.”

WALLET:

Mpilo always uses public transport and stores her transport cards in her wallet, making it her most important possession. Louis’ wallet has a more sentimental value. Many years ago, someone made a special purse designed specifically to hold the many cards he has. The spine of the original purse broke but he has since had the design replicated exactly.

WATCH:

Given to her by her late mother, Sandra’s watch holds great sentimental value.



Wilfred Mchunu

TOURIST BROCHURES:

Wilfred and Gustav both chose tourist brochures as their items. For Wilfred, they are so important because they advertise his livelihood. He is extremely committed to his job.



Gustav Rohrs

WEDDING RING:

Gustav has worn his wedding ring for an impressive forty-five years. He says that even if he wanted to take it off, it would be a real mission.



Norman Leverage

KEYS:

Norman values his car because it gets him from point A to point B a lot quicker than we can walk and so his car keys are his most important item. The car has had various people trying to open it without his permission and so his car keys now include one key for the one door, one key for the second door, and another key for a third door.



Thokozile S Mbele



Hlabile Nshangase & Mxolisi Mdluli



Siyabonga S Moloi



Sphamandla Luvuna



Sindi Ndlovu & Rosalind Selepe



Siyathakaza Africa



Barnwell Masuku

CELL PHONE:

The majority of your group identified their cell phone as the most important item they carry with them. You use it primarily for communication, such as text messaging, WhatsApp and receiving calls, but also for accessing social media, conducting research for work and sharing music. Sindi, Rosalind and

Siyathakaza value their phone because it's the way they maintain contact with and stay updated about their young children when they are away from them. Norman considers his phone important but also describes it as "a cursed thing!"

YOUR COMMUNITY

Museums across the world have used collection items and exhibitions to define and represent groups of people and communities. Very often, such groups have been interpreted by people who are not actually part of the community being represented. We used one of our afternoon sessions to consider how you would describe your community using your own words. These were some of the words you chose:

Educated
Middle Class
Religious
Rich and Poor
Criminals
Cultured
Young and Old
Diverse
Zulu
Sotho
Afrikaans
English
German
Cohesive
Mining
Battlefields
Industrial
Water Shortages
Migrants



"IMYUZIYEMU YENU"

YOUR MUSEUM

Having thought about how you'd describe your community, the final question you answered was, "is there anything else we haven't seen today that you'd include in a museum exhibition about your community and your culture?" You proposed including items to represent the taxi industry, something that plays such an important part in many people's lives in your region. Other suggestions included maps, the muthi that can be bought by the roadside and more oral histories that don't focus only on the grand political narratives. You also advised focussing on the different ways communities raise their children. More broadly, you suggested that the exhibit must be linked to the school curriculum. At present, such items are not included in the Iziko collections.



The current display of Zulu culture at Iziko's South African Museum in Cape Town

ALSO IN THE IZIKO MUSEUMS OF SOUTH AFRICA SOCIAL HISTORY COLLECTIONS

The old South African Museum collected nearly one thousand items that it classified as "Natal Nguni" and "Zulu." Most are now housed in the new Iziko Social History centre located close to Parliament and the Company Gardens in Cape Town. They are stored in secure, climate controlled rooms. This is a small selection of these items.



Keep the conversation alive. Keep in touch: laura.gibson@kcl.ac.uk



CONTRIBUTORS

Siyabonga S Moloi
Thokozile S Mbele
Rosalind Selepe
Slindi Ndlovu

Sphamandla Luvuno
Mpilo Dlamini
Sandra Williams
Absai Mhlongo

Hlobisile Nitshangase
Mxolisi Mdululi
Gustav Röhrs
Siyathokoza Africa

Wilfred Mchunu
Bornwell Masuku
Norman Leveridge
Louis Eksteen

Special thanks to Pam McFadden who kindly assisted with organising and hosting the event.

Written and published by Laura Kate Gibson, 2017.
For more information contact laura.gibson@kcl.ac.uk
Design by Salma Price-Nell of thesalsacreative.com

OBJECTS, CULTURES AND STORIES IN MUSEUMS



The KwaZulu Cultural Museum, 4 April 2017



Published in 2017
Images: Laura Kate Gibson
Original materials: Ieko Museums of South Africa



ABOUT LAURA KATE GIBSON

Originally from the UK, I first moved to South Africa in 2005 to study for an MPhil in African Studies at the University of Cape Town. My current PhD research builds on this and my Bachelor's with Honours degree in History from the University of Durham, UK, as well as postgraduate courses in Museum Studies at the University of Toronto, Canada. I have since been very fortunate to work at some fascinating museums, including the Luthuli Museum in Grahamstown, KwaZulu-Natal, and the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., USA, where I was a Research Fellow in 2015. South Africa has always made me feel very welcome and I am delighted that this research means another opportunity to spend time here.

A MESSAGE TO ALL PARTICIPANTS

On Tuesday 4 April 2017,

you gathered at the KwaZulu Cultural Museum with staff and community members from the Ieko area. Your group spanned several generations, and your interests vary from spending time with your children, going to church and making shweshwe beads, to listening to Muzik and making shweshwe beads. For me, the day was a wonderful opportunity to get to know you and to explore ideas about Zulu material culture, heritage and identity. Our big, over-arching question for the day was "Ingoma kanyisa ukuthi ukuphila kwakusikho amagama kanyisa kanyisa?" (How can we make museum collections more relevant, representative and accessible to the communities from which they are collected?)

You first received pictures

of six items originally collected by the South African Museum (SAM) in Cape Town during the colonial and apartheid eras. These items were all classified as "Natal Nguni" and "Zulu" by the Museum. Some of the items were more recognisable to your group than others. Today these items form part of the Ieko Museums of South Africa's Social History collections. We spent time identifying the items, sharing information and stories about them, deciding how we would present them to communities less familiar with Zulu culture and then comparing these results with the information held in the museum catalogue cards. It became clear that your community's knowledge and curiosity could stretch these records and the stories they subsequently tell.

The items historically collected

by the SAM were considered representations of Zulu culture and objects widely used by the group in the past. It was the SAM staff and curators who made decisions about what to collect, determined how the items would

be classified and what information would be captured in the museum records. The records they produced primarily met the Museum's needs and were written in English.

After lunch, our focus switched

to thinking about items used today in your communities. Your group shared examples of items you normally carry with you: Cell phones, cosmetics, ID books, cigarettes, money, hand lotion, CVC and a special ring all featured. What they demonstrate is the dynamic nature of your community and how integrated it is in a modern, global material culture, something the SAM collection historically denied. This led us to consider how you would describe your community in small groups you reflected on the ways your community has changed over the years, influenced particularly by Christianity and urbanisation. You joy, however, that people are now interested in returning to their roots, in learning more about the ancestral and ancestral communities that emphasise Ubuntu, such as eating and drinking together. Khoronoko Hlangane invited us to a wonderful poem praising Zulu's rich history.

Finally, your group answered the question,

"What would you put in an exhibition about your culture and community?" Your suggestions included Ibhakhe, adwebo, efika, efika, a bible, an ID book and a cell phone.

I am truly grateful to all of you for giving up your time and for contributing so enthusiastically during the day. The KwaZulu Cultural Museum was a wonderful location for the event and the staff were generous hosts throughout the preparations and on the day. The results from the activities will be an extremely valuable contribution to my PhD research on democratising knowledge. To all of you who made this possible, Ngyobongo kothulu!

“KUYINI LOKU, FUTHI UTHINI UMLANDO WAKHO?” WHAT’S THIS AND WHAT’S ITS STORY?

The items shown to your group were collected in the colonial and apartheid era from the oral history project at Weizulu-Ndaba The South African Museum curators recorded information about these items on catalogue cards shown here. While this information became accepted as authoritative, we should remember that it captures just one version of the item's story. However, the story collected and recorded the harsh inequalities and injustices of colonialism and apartheid.

What is missing from most of the museum records is the other stories, particularly those of the people and their descendants who made and used these items, the discordant community. Our subsequent discussions were an opportunity to hear your thoughts about these items, what information you would record about them and how you would record this information as part of the source community. This is merely a short summary selection of your many excellent contributions.



BEADED GIRDLE

WHAT YOU SAY:

"This goes by the name uhlwimi uhlwimi uhlwimi. It is used by women when they have given birth. When black people saw that the stomach legs after birth, they inserted this to help women recover their original figure. If you're using it after giving birth, you have to cover it with fabric so that it doesn't hurt you when bringing your tummy back into place. Secondly, it is used by married women on part of their traditional attire, to enhance her beauty."

Item no.	11
Item name	Beaded girdle
Material	Beads, fabric
Origin	South Africa
Date	1970
Collector	Dr. J. D. D. D.
Notes	

BASKET

WHAT YOU SAY:

"This is 'lulu' and it is made of dried mango leaves. Lulu is used by our mothers when they come back from harvesting the fields and eat the food they have prepared in it. You use it to store food and you can easily see the mouldy ones and you can see them. They store food in it for months without them going. It's basically like a fridge. People called it 'lulu' (even) do not come in here, because it is cold. But you wouldn't store tomatoes in it because they would spoil."

Item no.	12
Item name	Basket
Material	Dried mango leaves
Origin	South Africa
Date	1970
Collector	Dr. J. D. D. D.
Notes	



Item no.	13
Item name	Sweet herb
Material	Dried sweet herb
Origin	South Africa
Date	1970
Collector	Dr. J. D. D. D.
Notes	

SWEET HERB

WHAT YOU SAY:

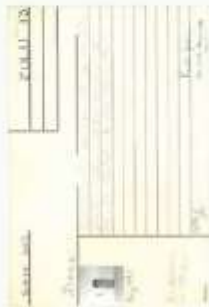
"This is Impatiens (Irene). Impatiens is a tree that grows wet. When it's fully grown you can take it and fold it up and leave it to dry. You can use it to communicate with your ancestors. You burn it if it's the umkonto and when it smokes, you can communicate with the ancestors. Traditional healers also use it to connect with their ancestors. Most of the time it is used by an elderly person, and normally a man, unless the songene is female. But not everyone is allowed to speak of umkonto. We learnt all this knowledge growing up, there wasn't one person who taught it to us."

"It is also used by hives - if one is not feeling well, they can burn it, but it and bottle with it. Also if you have a headache, you burn it and inhale it. Others use it when they have a toothache. There's also another herb in the picture called uhlwimi. This is less familiar to us."

DOLL

WHAT YOU SAY:

"Everyone agrees that this piece is not Zulu in our collection we have something like this, made of wood and beads. But it isn't from KZN."



POT

WHAT YOU SAY:

"This one we called imbiza it's not ukhambha because of its wide mouth. Imbiza is used to brew beer. It's made of umhombu (clay). When the clay is still hot, you can use a stick to make a design in it if you want to decorate it. Before we knew the beer, we first fill it with umhombu (insula porridge) so that it when it cools, it can seal any cracks inside the imbiza so that it will not leak. We return the cooled porridge to the imbiza and we put in umhombu to brew the beer."

"We called it ukhambha which is used by men to drink beer at home when there is an event or drinking at home. Our fathers or brothers used to make mepas (sour milk) in the ukhambha. It tastes better (drunk) from the ukhambha."



SNUFF SPOON

WHAT YOU SAY:

"At first we thought it's just a spoon, ukhago or khambha. But now we see it's very small, so we think it's umhombu. It's a small spoon and you use it to spoon snuff. It's made of horn, cow horn. Both men and women use it. You find it in this region as well as others."



"YINI ESIKHWAMENI SAKHO?" WHAT'S IN YOUR BAG?

You shared three items with your partner that you normally carry with you and that are important to you. Some of the items have practical purposes while others hold sentimental value. Most of items you chose are globally available but you have adapted them to meet you specific, more local needs.



MONEY:

Some of you chose cash or your bank cards. You say you need money to provide for yourselves and your children.

ACCESSORIES:

Zinhle has her sunglasses with her and Schabale always wears a ring that belonged to her late mother. When she feels sad or misses her, she looks at this ring.



DOCUMENTS:

ID books and driver's licenses are items many of you keep in your pockets or in your bags. These prove who you are if you run into any problems. Inethi says that since she is always looking for work, she also carries her CV and qualification documents everywhere with her.

STATIONERY:

Several members of your group are writers and poets and so keep a pen and paper on their person at all times. Nontobela says she carries these so that if she sees something that interests her, she can take notes and then write a poem about it when she gets home.





COSMETICS:

Several female participants said they always carry cosmetic and hygiene items in their bags, such as nail-ons, perfume, lipstick, wipes and hand lotion. Northkuto and Suz had a particularly impressive range of these items in their bags!



CELL PHONE:

Many of you said you don't leave home without this item because this is the main way your friends and family can contact you. Sphilele's phone belonged to her late mother and so it also has sentimental value.



YOUR COMMUNITY

Museums across the world have used collection items and exhibitions to define and represent groups of people and communities. Very often, such groups have been interpreted by people who are not actually part of the community being represented. We used one of our afternoon sessions to consider how you would describe your community. You said that your community has changed dramatically over the years. The clothes you wear today are vastly different from those worn in the old days. Christianity and Western-style education mean that there has been a break in performing certain ceremonies to mark different stages in life and to honour the ancestors. You lamented the loss of some of these practices but also realised that you no longer have to carry a doornail as you did under apartheid. You also say that there is now increased interest in your community's history and older ways of living where people are together and shared things with one another.

Northkuto Mpingose shared the following poem on behalf of her group. She originally performed this in isiZulu and it was received with applause andulations from the rest of the group.

Let us celebrate and rejoice in what is ours from Zululand.
Celebrate in dance and / too will celebrate and pose it on.
We are a blessed nation in that we have a beautiful history.
Let us be proud of our rich language in idioms, proverbs and figures of speech.

Our inheritance from our home Zululand
Our forefathers left us gold.
Let us hold on to it so that even the coming generation will find it and be glad in it.
Our inheritance from our home Zululand

You hold on well to something that is a treasure, so that it can help you tomorrow.
Let it be light as a fist and not slip through your fingers like water.

We started as a small nation and grew until we defeated other nations.
Our inheritance from our home Zululand

We hear of your wisdom and greatness.
You held it well and today we are proud of our history as the Zulu people.
Our inheritance from our home Zululand

Yes, it is still dark for some of us deep in the hole.
I say to those who have made it.
May they extend a hand to those still in the hole.
Our inheritance from our home Zululand

It's getting better.

The flag is starting to clear.
Let us hold it Zulu and not rejoice in dancing in other people's shoes.
When we have our own from Zululand.
Our inheritance from our home Zululand

If you want to know yourself a bit better,
Stretch your feet and visit the royal palace of King Chelwagaya, eNtshu.
A place in the mountains of Nondwengeti.
And there you will get to know.
You will have basotho, born again, knowing who the Zulu are.
Our inheritance from our home Zululand
We are rich in so many things.

I could spend days and weeks telling of our riches.
Of us the Zulu nation.
Our inheritance from our home Zululand

Northkuto Mpingose

"IMYUZIYEMU YENU" YOUR MUSEUM

Having thought about how you'd describe your community, the first question you answered was, "Is there anything else we haven't seen today that you'd include in a museum exhibition about your community and your culture?" You proposed including items that might be considered both "traditional" and "modern." *Akhefu* (male Zulu apron), *ukwaba* (leather skirt worn by married Zulu women), *ipheda* (hat worn by married Zulu women), *ihunga* (milk pot), a table, an ID book and a cell phone. At present, only a few of these items are included in the Iziiko collections.



The current display of Zulu culture of Iziiko's South African Museum in Cape Town

ALSO IN THE IZIKO MUSEUMS OF SOUTH AFRICA SOCIAL HISTORY COLLECTIONS

The old South African Museum collected nearly one thousand items that it classified as "Hottentot" and "Zulu." Most are now housed in the new Iziiko Social History Centre located close to Parliament and the Company Gardens in Cape Town. They are stored in secure, climate controlled rooms. This is a small selection of those items.



Keep the conversation alive. Keep it fresh. iziko@iziko.ac.za

CONTRIBUTORS

Bongiwe Dube, Busi Ntuli, Fikile Sindiswe Sibiya, G. I. Mthimkulu, Isaac Mthimkhulu, Landeleni Khoza, Lungile Ndlovu, Sipho Vilakazi, Mballi Majazi, Dumisa Mfakazeleni, Nonhlanhla Mpungose, Nontobeko Gumede, Nontokozo Dlamini, Sophelele Ntombela, Sipho Vilakazi, Snothile Dube, Thelakele Zulu, Thobile Mbatha, Winile Ngema, Zakithi Mthembu, Zandile Xulu, Zinhle Mabaso and Zizile Khoza.

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Written and published by Laura Kate Gibson, 2017. For more information contact laura.gibson@kcl.ac.uk

Design by Salma Price-Nell of thesalsacreative.com

Appendix 6: Workshop Evaluation Results

1. Asked if they thought the workshop had achieved its objective to consider “how can we make museum collections more relevant, representative and accessible to the communities from which they were collected?”

Strongly Agreed	14 people	82%
Agreed	3 people	18%

2. Of those questioned, the following reported they had spoken to anyone else than other participants about the workshop since the event:

Yes	15 people	88%
No	2 people	12%

3. Asked which part of the workshop was most memorable to them several weeks later, the participants offered the following answers:

- I remember all the products that you introduced to the participants for that day from Zulu pot, belt and beer skimmer and I also remembered the product that confused most of us was puzzle thank to laura for reminding us about where we from by showing us this product as well the stories she asked to write it
- The traditional equipment that were showcased
- Sikhuluma ngamacell phone (We were talking about my cell phone)
- The puzzle game that was the first for me to see
- Discussing The original things made by Africans in the olden days.
- Inxenywe esahlezi emqondweni wam ilena yokuthi kukhonani esikhwameni sami/ yini le engithi mengihamba ngingahluka nayo esikhwameni Sam. (The one area that stood out for me is when we were discussing the part where we had to say what was in our bags/ what was the one thing we do not part with)
- The what's in your bag segment
- Yes
- Indlela izipahla zasemuseum ezichazwa ngayo edlela ezibizwa nanemisebenzi eziyenzayo (The way the museum items are explained, the way they are made and their uses)
- Ukufunda kokubaluleka kwezinto ezazisetshenziswa emandulo, nesakhiwo zazo (Learning about the importance of things that were used long ago and how they were made)
- Culture
- Info on each object discussed
- Giving different functions of the same item and also learning from each other about the names and also how some things are made.

- Umbono wamaqoqo wezinto esasixoxa ngazo (The idea of the collection of items we were discussing)
- Ingxenye esele emqondweni wami ukuthi safunda ngezinto zesizulu ezazisetshenziswa kudala (The one area that stood out for me was learning about Zulu items that were used long ago)
- Ingxenye eyasala emqondweni wami sasichaza ngezinto ezazisetshenziswa kudala (The one area that stood out for me is when we were discussing about items we used to use long ago)
- We were working in groups discussing the differences in all cultural stuff e.g beets

4. Participants were asked to choose up to 5 information categories that they thought most important in terms of describing an item since attending the workshop. They selected the following;

Name of item in isiZulu	14 people
Place item was collected	5 people
What item is used for	9 people
Name of item in English	2 people
Photograph of item	1 person
Place item was made	4 people
Name of person who made item	2 people
Video clip of item being made	2 people
Video clip of item being used	1 person
If the maker was male or female	1 person
Materials in which item is made	2 people
Colour of item	1 person

Name of person who collected item	1 person
-----------------------------------	----------

None of the participants selected “size of the item” or “other” from the choices.

At present, Iziko does not record the isiZulu name of all items in its catalogue cards yet these participants overwhelmingly see this as the most important piece of information; people who chose just one category tended to select this one.

In person museum visits

5. Asked if they had visited a museum in person since the workshop, the participants answered:

Yes	10 people	59%
No	7 people	41%

Participants who have visited a museum since workshop:

Of the 10 people who had visited a museum since the workshop, **9 people** (90%) **Strongly Agreed** that attending the workshop had influenced them to make this visit and **1 person** (10%) **Agreed**.

From this group that had visited a museum in person, **5 people** (50%) **Strongly Agreed** that they were satisfied with the information they found at the museum and the other **5 people** (50%) **Agreed** with this statement. Asked if their opinion about the quality of the information was affected by attending the workshop, **3 people** (30%) **Strongly Agreed**, **6 people** (60%) **Agreed** and **1 person** (10%) **Disagreed**.

Participants were asked to comment on what they liked about the information given at the museum. The responses are given below. Based on some of these responses, I would suggest that the question was open to misinterpretation since some of the answers seem to be given in relation to information given at the workshop at the museum:

- I love it, it give me the clear picture on what they talking about
- I like everything that was explained in the given information because it showed that our Zulu cultures are still highly respected
- Akukho engingakuthanda (They was nothing I was interested in)
- I liked the fact that the item I learn about was original and some of us had seen it
- Ngithandaukwaz !ngemvelaphiyethu (I love knowing about my heritage)
- Ukhamba ixhama isilulu itshengula (calabash, waistband, isilulu, itshengula)
- Engakuthanda- ukhamba, isilulu nexhama. Engikakuthandanga udoli
- What I liked was the calabash ‘ukhamba’, food basket ‘isilulu’ and waistband ‘ixhama’. What I didn’t like was the doll.
- Spelling of other names
- The indigenous knowledge that can be transfer to young people

- It lasted for a day only. There were too few items.

Participants who have NOT visited a museum since workshop:

The 7 people who have not visited a museum since the workshop gave the following reasons:

- **5 people** (71%) were **too busy**,
- **1 person** (14.5%) finds museums **too expensive**
- **1 person** (14.5%) chose “**other**” reason but didn’t explain further.

Virtual museum visits

6. Asked if they had visited a museum website or online exhibition since the workshop, the participants answered:

Yes	7 people	41%
No	10 people	59%

Participants who have made a virtual visit to a museum since workshop:

Of the 7 participants who answered yes, **4 people** (57%) **Strongly Agreed** and **3 people** (43%) **Agreed** that attending the workshop influenced them to make this virtual visit. They used the following devices to make this visit:

Cell phone	5 people	71%
Laptop	1 person	14.5%
Desktop computer	1 person	14.5%

5 people (71%) from these participants reported being **Very Satisfied** with the information provided online and **2 people** (29%) reported being **Satisfied**, although one commented that some of the items were not properly researched. All **7 people** (100%) stated that they **Strongly Agreed** that their opinion on the quality of information given was influenced by attending the workshop.

Of the 7 participants making the virtual museum visits, **3 people** (43%) **interacted with the website** (e.g. leave a comment or ‘like’ something) and **4 people** (57%) **didn’t interact with the website**. Of those interacting with the website, **2 people** (67%) **Strongly Agreed** and **1 person** (33%) **Agreed** that their decision to do so was influenced by attending the workshop.

Participants who have NOT made a virtual visit to a museum since workshop:

The 10 people who have not made a virtual visit to a museum since the workshop gave the following reasons:

- **4 people (40%) No internet access**
 - **2 people (20%) Don't know any**
 - **2 people (20%) chose "Other" reason without explaining further**
 - **1 person (10%) Too much data to access them**
 - **1 person (10%) Doesn't understand how to access them**
7. Of the 7 people who made virtual visits to the museum, 4 had also made in person visits to museums while 3 had made only virtual visits.
8. The penultimate question participants answered was whether attending the workshop had influenced them in any other ways. The answers they gave were as followed:
- Not at all
 - I have learned that some of the cultural equipment are multi-purpose
 - Yebo ngokwazi nge art (Yes, by learning about art)
 - Yes by driving me to dig more on heritage and culture
 - I will visit other museums
 - Yebo kungenze ngabona kubalulekile kakhulu ukugcinwa kwezinto zakdala (Yes, it made me see the importance of keeping of items from long ago)
 - I view cultural objects with a developed sense of curiosity. I want to know who made them, when and why.
 - Yebo (Yes)
 - Ukubaluleka kokuchazwa kwezinto ezigciniwe emuseum nanokuthi yiniumsebenzi wazo (The importance of the information of the items kept in museums and their uses)
 - Ukuziqaja ngemvelaphi Yethu, nokwazi indlela OKwakuphilwa ngayo kudala (To be proud of our roots and knowing how people lived long ago)
 - More knowlege.
 - My interest about Zulu culture
 - Yes of course. I have come to realise that , yes technology makes life easier but hand made things from natural (elements) did not cause pollutions. Yes they wear off quickly but the eccosystym was never disturbed
 - Kukhona ulwazi engiluthole emhlanganweni (I got some knowledge from the workshop)
 - Kube nomthelela ngoba khona engakunda (It had a hand because I learnt about some things)
 - Yebo ngathola ulwazi ngokufunda ngokufunda kwezinto zakudala (Yes, I got a lot in learning about items from long ago)
 - Yes because now I do or understand on some items and also working as a group helps the most

While responses varied and one person did state that the workshop had not influenced their life in any way, the majority of participants stated that attending the workshop had either piqued their interest in and knowledge about Zulu material culture and history, with some claiming that they will now pursue these interests further, some by visiting museums in future, or developing further their pride in their culture, or in ways of working together.

9. The final question asked participants to offer suggestions for improving the workshop in future so that it could meet its objective to consider “how can we make museum collections more relevant, representative and accessible to the communities from which they were collected?” Participants offered the following recommendations:


- People must get invites early
- By asking different age groups to showcase and explain each cultural object that have or have seen
- Cha (No)
- By going to the communities and start let them engage themselves to the knowledge of culture
- People must be must be encouraged to visit museums
- Yebo, umphakathi uyasizakala kanye no museum uyasizakala ngokuqoqwa kwezinto zesintu. (Yes the community and museum do benefit by the collection of traditional items)
- Maybe involve the people who makes these items or involve the elderly
- Yebo (Yes)
- Ukuba zigcinwe Noma zilethwe ezindaweni yokugcina izinto ezingamagugu (For treasured items to be kept or brought to their last place)
- Visit the community
- It should include tradition leadership
- Involve the younger generation as well so that the culture of making these things does not die out so that the talent that exist in one family moved from generation to generation some people are self employed creating these crafts they are able to maintain their families pay for their children’s education and also showing people from other parts of the world how people in your area used to live .
- Yebo ukuxhumanisa umphakathi no museum ukuze bathole ulwazi (Yes, to connect the community with the museum, so they can receive knowledge)
- Yebo basizakala bonke (Yes, they were all assisted)
- Maybe the commutation should be more relevant and posters can also help so that there will be more people coming to the museum Rather then using the same cell phone numbers of people who already has an idea on what is really going on and already enjoys learning more about cultural items

Appendix 7.1. – SAM Item 1164 “Pot”

[illegible]


Appendix 7.2. – SAM Item 643 “Doll”



S.A.M. 643		ZULU ^{D. 3} 13	
DOLL			
 <p>Neg 11811</p> <p>L - 225 mm W - 81 mm</p> <p>Hortors</p>		<p>Stylizedly similar to the Sotho- style from Sotho endore at Utrecht, Natal - PD, Mrs. 27/4/1891.</p> <p>973/c</p> <p>Purch. from Mr. v. d. Heer 1903</p>	

Appendix 7.3. – SAM Item 6732 “Puzzle”



SAM 6732		ZULU ^B 18	
PUZZLE			
			
B6/b		DUNN Coll: 60 (1871-86) Presented Sept. 1948	


HOKTORS-91163/3/46

A wide, woven belt with a colorful striped pattern (red, green, black, yellow, blue) and a central section of gold-colored beads. The belt is made of a light brown woven material and has a small tassel hanging from the center.

© HORTON, C.T.


Appendix 7.5. – SAM Item 5010 “Armband”



<u>S.A.M. 5010.</u>		<u>ZULU^A 13</u>	
		<u>Ngungundlovu^A</u>	
		<u>Natal</u>	
<u>ARM BAND</u>		<u>?TINGVOTA</u>	
 Length 14.1cm. D. at narrowest 6.7cm. D. at widest 8.5cm. Thickness of metal .2cm.	Brassgauntlet, cylindrical shape, open down back, flared towards one end. Raised pattern in 17 horizontal rows. Oval section.		
Literature Ref. B.T.O. Ez N. Nguni		Presented by: Col. Denys Reibz 1931	

Appendix 7.7. – SAM Item 9542 “Club”



<u>SAM 9452</u>		<u>ZULU^B</u>	
		<u>Eshowe^A</u>	
		<u>Natal</u>	
<u>CLUB</u>			
		Smooth, polished. Brass band + rings for decoration, possibly strengthening tho' doesn't cover a crack (Ut)	
Neg 7836 L. 79,5cm D. head 6,5cm		"Natal Police" club. Presented to the donor's father when magistrate at Eshowe 1884-5	
		Presented by Miss J. Koch Dec. 1968	
HORTONS, C.T.		967/d	




Appendix 7.9. – SAM Item 11970 “Medicine Flask”



SAM 11970		ZULU ^A 1.3	
		Hlazagazi ^A - KwaZulu	
Medicine flask	isigubu		
	Obtained from a medicine man, Nyanga		
	Kingsley-Holgate Coll., purch.		
	B27/d contd.	April 1981	

Appendix 7.10. – SAM Item 5982 “Stick”




S.A.M. 5982		ZULU 13	
		Isandhlwana Battlefield	
		Natal	
STICK			
		Intricate wirework decoration. Brass and iron wire bound and woven over the entire length of stick. Brass and copper wire are are twisted and bound over the entire length. Separated at intervals by woven iron wire bands. Bulbous end.	
Total L. 82cm D. 1.5cm.			
		Found on the field at Isandhlwana.	
		Negs 7832/7831 G142/6	
Hortons—91193/3/16		PURCHASED FROM: Mrs. REYNOLDS. Feb. 1939	

Appendix 7.11. – SAM Item 6734 “Snuff Spoon”



SAM 6734		ZULU ¹ 13
		Zululand ²
		Natal

SNUFF- SPOON	
	<p>Tapering oval bowl has a well defined lower edge which separates it from the neck of the handle. Handle narrows to a rounded point and is carved to form a neck below the bowl. A slight ridge is seen on underside between bowl and neck; blackened cross-hatching decorates the underside of neck and handle for 2.5cm after which metal wire is wound around the handle for .5cm. Polished overall. ³ Bone</p>
<p>Total length: 11.1cm W of bowl: 1.5" L of bowl: 2.5"</p>	
<p>Howros—91183/3/46</p>	<p>B43/r</p>
<p>Drum Coll. 145 (1871-86) Presented: Sept. 1948</p>	

Appendix 7.12. – SAM Item 10616 “Beaded Girdle”



SAM 10616		ZULU [^] 1.3	
		Mahlabatini [^] kwaZulu	
Beaded girdle	isiFociya [^]		
Made for SAM per Mrs Nxumalo			
B15/m		April 1975	

TYPEX

Appendix 7.13. – SAM Item 10932 “Sweet Herb”



<u>SAM 10932</u>		<u>BUTHELEZI^B</u>	<u>13^A</u>
		<u>Mbhekamuzi^A</u>	
		<u>Mahlabatlani KwaZulu</u>	
<u>Sweet herb</u>	<u>imphepho^A</u>		
Put on the hearth to scent the hut.			
This variety said by seller to be used by chiefs.			
Bought at roadside market 2km south of			
Lom off to Cesa Hospital			
(The one with flowers - Melanthera - 5 plants)			
(10c)			
Bought by E.M.S.			
27.4.1977			
TYPEX	B26/m		

SAM 10933

BUTHELEZI

13

Mbhekamuzi

Mahlabatini, KwaZulu

SWEET HERB

imphepho umpilo

Put on the hearth to scent the hot
This variety said by seller to be used by
ordinary people

Bought at roadside market 2km south of
turn-off to Ceza Hospital

(10c)

Bought by E.M.S.

37.4.1977

TYPEX

B26/m